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ABSTRACT

The sixth of 10 reports from a longitudinal, national evaluation study in which Project Head Start children and their parents were followed from preschool through the fourth grade, this document describes the process data which were collected in the spring of 1979 during one-week site visits to each of the 65 participating programs. Chapter I provides further information about the purpose and background of the national evaluation, presents and describes the conceptual framework for the study, and discusses the instruments and data collection procedures used. Chapter II describes an experimental program initiated by Head Start--the Basic Educational Skills Initiative (BES)--and the selection of local Head Start programs for participation in the BES demonstration programs. Chapter III presents and discusses the process data obtained on the 17 BES programs which were funded for the 1978-79 program year. Introductory remarks emphasize that the unique aspect of the evaluation partially described in this report is its focus on the relationship between program delivery and program effects on a national scale. (Author/RH)

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ED211190

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEAD START EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

Project Report 6: Description and Analysis of Program Data: Basic Educational Skills Initiative

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Basic Educational Skills Head Start Programs

Seattle, Washington
Knoxvile, Tennessee
Topeka, Kansas
Spokane, Washington
Naples, Florida
Gary, Indiana
Easton, Pennsylvania
Albany, New York
Red Lake, Minnesota
East Boston, Massachusetts
Leominsister, Massachusetts
Russelville, Arkansas
Amarillo, Texas
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Pleasant Hill, California
Huntington, West Virginia
Riverside, California

Head Start Programs

Goldsboro, North Carolina
Sumter, South Carolina
Asheville, North Carolina
New Bern, North Carolina
Edenton, North Carolina
York, Alabama
Maywood, Illinois
Norfolk, Virginia
Greeley, Colorado
Elmsford, New York
Saginaw, Michigan
Seattle, Washington
Redwood, California
Chicago, Illinois
Chandler, Oklahoma
Detroit, Michigan
Columbus, Ohio
Baltimore, Maryland
Denmark, South Carolina
Uniontown, Pennsylvania
Price, Utah
Austin, Texas
Lafayette, Louisiana
Jackson, Mississippi
Terrell, Texas
Oceana, West Virginia
Greensburg, Pennsylvania
Los Angeles, California

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEAD START EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND
BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS INITIATIVE

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INTRODUCTION TO EVALUATION

Each year Head Start programs serve approximately 385,000 children and families, at a cost of over $700 million dollars--the largest annual federal expenditure for the education of preschool children. NTS Research Corporation is currently conducting the beginning phases of the largest and potentially most long-term evaluation of Head Start programs yet planned. The overall purpose of this evaluation is to assess the impact, on the children and parents being served, of: (1) the educational services component of Head Start programs nationwide, and (2) a new demonstration program within Head Start, Basic Educational Skills. The evaluation deals with a total of 65 Head Start programs and their families, potentially for 10 to 12 years.

Head Start is a nationwide program for preschool children of low-income families and is supported by the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Since its inception in 1965, the goal of Head Start has been to improve each child's ability to deal both with the present environment in which he/she lives and with later responsibilities in school and life. Head Start provides services not only in the educational area, but also in the areas of health, nutrition, parent involvement and social services. While this is an evaluation of the educational component, the study also gathers information on Head Starts' other components.

The Basic Educational Skills Program is the newest experimental project initiated by Head Start. As stated in the BES Program Guidelines:[1]

> The purpose of the project is to demonstrate and test effective educational strategies that help young children acquire developmentally appropriate educational skills in a climate that supports physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development. The project links Head Start programs and public schools, together with parents, in a collaborative effort to facilitate the child's learning experiences. The overall objective is to enhance school readiness, later school achievement, and to promote attitudes conducive to life long learning. The specific aim is to try out a variety of educational approaches to increase the child's basic educational skills, with emphasis on learning outcomes in oral language, reading, writing, mathematics, science, problem-solving, and learning attitudes. (Learning attitudes includes self-esteem as a learner, motivation, curiosity, initiative, purposefulness, persistence, task completion, and interest in life-long learning.) (p. 1)

> The goals of this project are to examine the effectiveness of a variety of approaches of implementing the four program elements: Curriculum, Parent Involvement, Teacher Attitudes and Behaviors, and Continuity. These program elements have been highlighted by reviews of research and educational practice as among the principal variables that affect children's educational achievement. The principal purpose of the BES field experiment is to determine the contribution of variables associated with the four elements to children's acquisition of basic educational skills. (p. 5)

Individual Head Start programs are operated by local grantees which are community action organizations, public school systems, tribal councils, and other non-profit agencies. Decisions about such issues as staff, curriculum, facilities, and recruitment procedures are made by a local policy council composed of parents and other members of the community. With this kind of local initiative, Head Start programs vary widely from one location to another in the ways in which they deliver services--within the guidelines of performance standards set by the Federal agency which funds and administers the program, the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). The national office of

[1]Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Basic Educational Skills Project: A Head Start Research and Demonstration Initiative in Collaboration With the Elementary Schools; Guidelines for Local Head Start Programs and Elementary Schools, March 1979.

ACYF also periodically funds special demonstration programs (such as BES) for the purpose of initiating testing, and disseminating innovative program ideas.

The regional offices of ACYF are responsible for monitoring local program service delivery to ensure that each program meets the required prformance standards. Evaluations of Head Start program outcomes are initiated by the national office of ACYF. The evaluations are diverse and include three distinct kinds:

- Evaluations of the basic National Head Start program, which use representative national samples of about 30 of the total 1,800 programs, and examine the areas of Health Services, Educational Services, Social Services, Parent Involvement, Services to Handicapped Children, Services to Migrant Children, and Staff Training.

- Evaluations of the Head Start demonstration programs, each of which involve about a dozen sites nationally, including, for example, Project Developmental Continuity, the Child and Family Resource Program, Home Start Training Centers, the Bilingual/ Bicultural Curriculum Project, and the BES Project.

- Projects to develop evaluation measures and methods; for example, the project to translate the ETS CIRCUS preschool test battery into Spanish, and the project to develop a comprehensive set of measures of program effects on preschool children.

This evaluation represents both the first and second categories above; it is a nationwide evaluation of the Educational Services of the basic Head Start Program and the evaluation of the newest Head Start demonstration project, Basic Educational Skills.

ACYF has actively gathered information over the past fifteen years regarding both program delivery and program effects. A unique aspect of the evaluation described in this report is its focus on the relationship between program delivery and program effects on a national scale.

Overview of the Head Start Evaluation Design

This evaluation is a longitudinal study that will follow children and their parents from preschool through the fourth grade. The study focuses on the preschool and elementary experiences of three groups of children and their parents:

- Those who participate in typical Head Start programs--the Head Start Study Group
- Those who are eligible for Head Start but who are not enrolled--the Alternative Services (Control) Group
- Those who participate in the Basic Educational Skills demonstration program--the BES Group

The major evaluation questions to be addressed in this study are as follows:

1. What different types of approaches do Head Start programs use to deliver educational services? How do these approaches differ in BES programs? How do these approaches differ from programs in alternative service settings?
2. How do different program approaches, and ways children and parents partake of the programs, affect the benefits achieved by children and parents?
3. Do children and parents in BES programs benefit more than children and parents in non-BES Head Start programs? Do children and parents in both BES and non-BES Head Start programs benefit more than children and parents in alternative service settings?

The dominant issues contained in this set of questions is a focus on the relationships between program delivery and program effects on a national scale.

As mentioned above, the evaluation is longitudinal and will study children (and their parents) from preschool through the fourth grade. Over the next three years, three cohorts (one small cohort and two full cohorts) of preschool age children will be studied. Each full cohort will be drawn from 16 Basic Educational Skills demonstration programs and from 30 randomly selected Head Start programs and their communities. It will involve 4560 children and their familier per cohort: 60 BES children from each BES program, 60 Head Start from each regular Head Start program, and 60 non-Head Start children from each regular Head Start program's community.

The study design is innovative for two reasons. First, it focuses on the relationships between process and outcome variables in preschool settings. Second, it is one of the first preschool field evaluations to incorporate a true experimental design. In those instances in which a participting Head Start program receives applications from more children than it can serve, random assignment of children into the Head Start program and a non-Head Start group will be implemented. The use of this study plan will, hopefully, result in one of the strongest research efforts ever conducted under the auspices of ACYF.

This report, Description and Analysis of Program Data: Basic Educational Skills Initiative, and its companion volume, Description and Analysis of Program Data: Head Start Sample Programs, describe the process data which was collected by NTS in the spring of 1979, during one-week site visits to each of the programs in the evaluation. These data serve as baseline information for the evaluation as well as an initial tryout of the instruments developed by NTS for program process data collection.

Chapter One of this report gives further information about the purpose and background of the evaluation: presents and describes the conceptual framework for the study; and discusses the instruments and data collection procedures used.

Chapter Two describes the Basic Educational Skills Initiative and the selection of local Head Start programs to become BES demonstration programs.

Chapter Three presents and discusses the process data obtained on the 17 BES programs which were funded for the 1978-79 program year.

Chapter Four discusses the characteristics of the BES programs in relation to the randomly selected Head Start programs which are also participating in this longitudinal evaluation.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION DESIGN

Purpose

The National Evaluation of Head Start Educational Services and the Basic Educational Skills Initiative is a combination of two evaluations. The first evaluation focuses on the impact of Head Start educational services on the children and families served by Head Start. The second evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of a new Head Start demonstration program, Basic Educational Skills.

The historical context within which this evaluation is embedded is important as this is the first national evaluation of the educational component of Head Start since the objectives and performance standards were implemented at the local level. A brief review of the history of Head Start evaluation follows.

Background for the Educational Services Evaluation

The study that has sustained public policy debate on Head Start for more than a decade (according to Collins, 1977) is the Westinghouse/Ohio study of the effects observed for elementary school children who attended Head Start in the initial years of the program (Cicirelli, et al, 1969). The lack of strong positive findings[1] from this study had several consequences, one of which was

[1]The results, however, were not negative: there were differences in favor of the HS children at the first grade.

the drying up of funds for HS longitudinal studies for a number of years.

Since the 1969 Westinghouse study a number of evaluations of Head Start have taken place. From 1969 to 1975 the evaluation activities centered on a variety of innovative options to improve health, social, educational and parent participation services to children and families. (Head Start Planned Variation, Smith 1973; Home Start Evaluation, Deloria, et al 1974; Project Developmental Continuity, Love, et al, 1977).

In 1975, the Office of Child Development (OCD - now the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, ACYF) planned a group of evaluations of the components of Head Start (health services, parent involvement, handicapped services and educational services -- the present study). The first study, Evaluation of the Transition of Head Start Children into Public Schools, was designed to present an overall picture of the impacts Head Start had upon participants (1977). This evaluation is part of the overall evaluation plan. It is designed specifically to examine the Educational Services component of the Head Start program. This is the largest national evaluation of the educational component of Head Start which has ever been attempted.

Background of the Basic Educational Skills Initiative

As mentioned above there have been a number of innovative programs within Head Start which have also contained evaluations. BES is the newest of these innovative programs. The Administration for Children, Youth, and Families is under Congressional mandate to evaluate all Head Start demonstration projects, such as BES (Public Law - 93-644, Sec 524(a)). As such, the BES program when initiated contained an evaluation component, the subject of this study.

Coincidental with the planning of the educational services evaluation, the Basic Educational Skills initiative was developed by the Planning and Development Division of ACYF. This was in response to a Presidential "call for

efforts to assist children in acquiring the basic skills they need to function successfully in a complex society (RFP, p.3)." The then Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Joseph Califano, requested through the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation that a project be developed through Head Start that would foster the acquisition of basic skills in children. Head Start personnel, with the assistance of Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, sought to define the parameters of such a program within the traditional goal of Head Start (to bring about a greater degree of social competence in children of low income families). The planning phase for the program culminated in the Head Start Basic Educational Skills Program, Phase I guidelines (Klein, 1978).

Because of the overlapping nature of the evaluation questions, it was decided to combine the educational services and basic educational skills evaluation into one project. The major purpose of the evaluation is to assess the impact of the educational services component of Head Start and the Basic Educational Skills Initiative on the children and parents being served.

Overview of the Study Design

As originally planned, this evaluation is a longitudinal study that will follow children and their parents from preschool through the sixth grade. The study focuses on the preschool and elementary experiences of three groups of children and their parents:

- Those who participate in typical Head Start programs--Head Start Study Group
- Those who are eligible for Head Start but who are not enrolled--the Alternative Services (Control) Group
- Those who participate in the Basic Educational Skills demonstration program--the BES Group

The major evaluation questions to be addressed in this study are as follows:

1. What different types of approaches do Head Start programs use to deliver educational services? How do these approaches differ in BES programs? How do these approaches differ from programs of alternative service setting?

2. How do different program approaches, and ways children and parents partake of the programs, affect the benefits achieved by children and parents?

3. Do children and parents in BES programs benefit more than children and parents in non-BES Head Start programs? Do children and parents in both BES and non-BES Head Start programs benefit more than children and parents in alternative service settings?

The dominant issue contained in this set of questions is a focus on the relationships between program delivery and program effects on a national scale.

As mentioned above, the evaluation is longitudinal and will study children (and their parents) from preschool through the sixth grade. Over the next three years, three cohorts (one small cohort and two full cohorts) of preschool age children will be studied. Each full cohort will be drawn from 30 to 35 Basic Educational Skills demonstration programs and from 30 randomly selected Head Start programs and their communities. It will involve 5400 children and their families: 60 BES children from each BES program, 60 Head Start children from each regular Head Start program, and 60 non-Head Start children from each regular Head Start program's community.

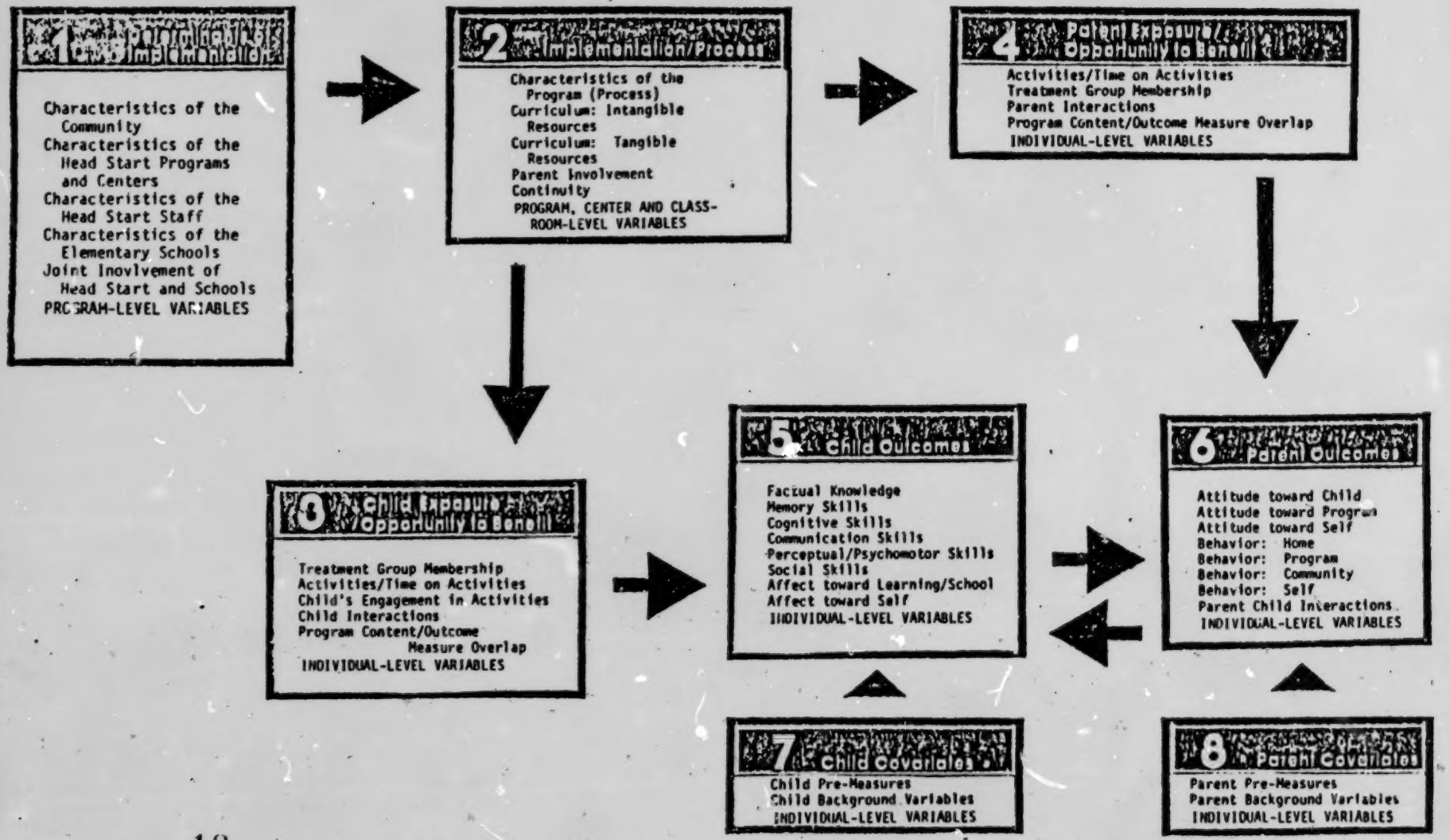
The study design is innovative for two reasons. First, it focuses on the relationships between process and outcome variables in preschool settings. Second, it is one of the first preschool field evaluations to incorporate a true experimental design. In those instances in which a participating Head Start program received applications from more children than it can serve, random assignment of children into the Head Start program and a non-Head Start group will be implemented. The use of this study plan will, hopefully, result in one of the strongest research efforts ever conducted under the auspices of ACYF.

Selecting and Defining the Variables of Interest: The Conceptual Framework for the Evaluation

The goal of this evaluation is to assess the impacts of the educational services component of Head Start and the Basic Educational Skills Initiative on the children and parents they serve. Fundamental to this objective is a conceptual framework that organizes the broad range of process and outcome variables of interest in this evaluation. In general, a conceptual framework is a network of mutually dependent hypotheses about the relationships between determinants, processes and outcomes. A good framework provides an intuitively accurate clustering and sequencing of policy-relevant variables. Such a framework is complete to the extent that new variables and relationships can be incorporated for examination without compromising the framework's integrity of design - that is, without contradicting the logic of its design. Similarly, a good framework will guide the search for unintended and unanticipated consequences of both naturally occurring phenomena and purposive social action.

Figure 1.1 presents the conceptual framework which NTS has followed during the first fifteen months of the National Evaluation of Head Start Educational Services and Basic Educational Skills Initiative, and provides a synthesis of key study objectives. The framework, conceptually, is a synthesis of several theoretical models (Stenner, Strang, and Baker, 1978; Fullan and Pomfret, 1977; Bloom, 1976; Cooley and Lohnes, 1976; and Carroll, 1963). Implicit in the proposed framework is a commitment to understanding the determinants of program implementation, as well as the determinants of student and parent outcomes. The conceptual framework functions simultaneously therefore as an heuristic tool for generating evaluation questions and as a schematic overview of the purpose, value and relative importance of those questions within the general context of of the project.

Conceptual Framework for the National Evaluation of Head Start Educational Services and Basic Educational Skills Initiative



1-6

The framework was initially conceived by NTS prior to contract award. It has since been modified, based upon insights of ACYF staff, Head Start project directors, and NTS consultants and staff. The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.1 is dynamic and longitudinal, to encompass the multidimensional nature of Head Start project processes and outcomes.

The conceptual framework for this study incorporates 8 components. Later in this section each component will be defined with discussions of the categories of variables included in each component. The first component, **Determinants of Implementation**, includes the variables thought to affect the success with which and the ways in which Head Start programs, BES programs, and other preschool programs are implemented. Component 2, **Implementation/Process**, contains those variables which describe the actual program as experienced by the children and families within Head Start and other preschools. Components 1 and 2 are composed variables which are measured at the program, center, and classroom levels.

Component 3, **Child Exposure/Opportunity to Benefit**, deals with the classroom experience of the individual child, drawing an important distinction between the availability of classroom resources and a child's use of them. Clearly, there are some children who derive greater benefit from available resources than others and the domains of this component attempt to distinguish the child characteristics and actions that are responsible for those variations, particularly the differences in time spent in the classroom, in the time spent in various activities, and in the level of engagement of individual children in those activities. The variables in this component are measured at the individual child level. Similarly, Component 4, **Parent Exposure/Opportunity to Benefit**, is also composed of variables which are measured at the individual

level and is an attempt to differentiate between individual parents' experiences in relation to the preschool program. The inclusion of two exposure-to-treatment components is a reflection of NTS's commitment to examining treatment as a continuous multivariate construct and as such is an explicit departure from the classic Fisherian experimental design that examines treatment and control as discrete conditions in which all experimental subjects receive uniform treatment. In a classical design, questions such as "how much treatment did the subject receive?" have limited meaning, for either the treatment was received or was not. Clearly then, an alternative approach must be used in the evaluation of Head Start, where treatment is multi-form and implemented non-uniformly, across and within centers and across and within classrooms.

Component 5, **Child Outcomes**, organizes the physical, cognitive and emotional/motivational dimensions of child development. These variables, like those in the following three components, are measured at the individual level.

Recognizing that the impact of Head Start on the child depends largely on parental attitudes and behaviors both in the home and at the center, Component 6, **Parent Outcomes**, addresses the relationships between parent and child, parent and home, parent and program, and parent and self. Finally, Components 7 and 8 include the covariates for children and parents, respectively. Included in the covariate sets will be pretest measures and theoretically relevant background variables. The covariate sets will be used to adjust for pretest differences not accounted for in the randomization process.

Thus far in the evaluation, NTS has gathered information regarding nearly all of the components of the conceptual framework and has designed instruments for the remaining components. During the site visits to the programs, which are the major focus of this report, the majority of the information collected pertained to the first two components of the framework, **Determinants of Implementation** and **Implementation/Process**.

In the fall of 1979, the initial administration of child tests took place. That data collection effort is described in Project Report 11, Phase II Executive Summary Report: Fall 1979 Child Data Collection. Those data form the initial information on Child Covariates and are involved in the Child Outcome component as pretest scores with which gain will be calculated once the postest is administered.

In the remainder of this section on the conceptual framework, the first three components are discussed in detail in preparation for presenting the data collected by NTS during the visits completed to the program sites.

Component One: Determinants of Implementation

Adopting the terminology of Fullan and Pomfret (1977), determinants of implementation are those factors which affect, both positively and negatively, the ways in which programs are implemented, and which have been observed by many investigators to operate as well in a wide range of instructional contexts: in ESEA, Title I (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975) in Career Education (Stenner, Strang, and Baker, 1978); and in Planned Change in Rural School Districts (Rosenblum and Louis, 1977). Others, such as Stufflebeam, et al., (1971), and Cooley and Lohns (1976), have discussed the general importance of "context variables" in evaluating educational innovation; and a number of researchers have noted the importance of specifying "the setting" within which an innovation takes place as a key factor in determining innovations' exportability to other sites [for example, Becker and Whisler (1967); Rodgers and Rodgers (1976); Fullan and Promfret (1977); and Pressman and Willavsky (1973)].

The variables within this component have been grouped into five categories: characteristics of the community, characteristics of the Head Start programs and centers, characteristics of the Head Start staff, characteristics of the elementary schools, and the joint involvement of Head Start and schools. The variables were generated from the literature review which was part of the

contract proposal preparation and from interaction with ACYF evaluation and program staff. The objective was to identify variables which would: (1) be descriptive of the programs involved in this study; (2) identify factors which may influence the program implementation; and (3) may be viewed as manipulable factors (capable of being purposively changed). For example, program admissions policies are important in describing an aspect of the program, may influence how the program is implemented, and are amenable to policy change. Therefore, if it is discovered that program admissions policies are strongly predictive of program implementation variables, it might be possible to intervene in programs with a view toward implementing admissions policies which have been found to be beneficial.

Variables in the component. Figure 1.2 gives further indication of the particular variables which have been identified in this component for this evaluation. Further discussion of the variables is contained later in this chapter when the data gathered during the site visits to the Head Start programs is discussed.

Instruments. During the first five months of the contract, NTS staff worked intensively with ACYF staff to develop the instruments for the collection of data during the following ten months of the study. Measures which were used for data collection on the variables relating to the Determinants of Implementation were interviews for the program staff, center staff, and teachers. These instruments (the Program Description Interview, Center Description Interview, and Teacher Interview) can be found in Appendix A. A small number of the variables listed in Figure 1.2 were not directly addressed by these instruments. Items relating to the history of innovation and the explicitness of program objectives were deleted from the preliminary instruments to reduce data collection time. Items relating to staff morale were found to be difficult to construct and were therefore deleted for the present. Since data collection

Figure 1.2

Variables Within the Determinants of Implementation
Component of the Conceptual Framework

Characteristics of the Community

Demographics
Support for public education
Community resources

Characteristics of the Head Start Programs and Centers

Nature of Grantee and Delegate agencies
Children and families served
Program admissions
Staff communication
Adoption strategies
Size of staff
History of innovation
Vigor of the policy group
Explicitness of the program objectives, activities and management plan

Characteristics of the Head Start Staff

Ethnicity
Language spoken
Age
Previous experience as a Head Start parent
Education
Work experience
Training - preservice and inservice
Staff morale

Characteristics of the Elementary Schools

(no variables yet measured)

Joint Involvement of Head Start and Schools

(no variables yet measured)

thus far in the study has not involved personnel in elementary schools, items relating to the characteristics of elementary schools and to the joint involvement of Head Start and elementary school programs have not yet been administered.

The interview instruments relevant to the **Determinants of Implementation** were administered to Head Start program staff during a week-long site visit made by an NTS staff member to each of the Head Start programs in the study (both BES and non-BES) in March, April and May of 1979.

Component Two: Implementation/Process

Delineating and measuring the **Implementation/Process** activities of BES, Head Start and non-Head Start programs are important for several reasons. First, it is already clear that Head Start is having a positive effect (see for example, Collins, 1977, and Datta, 1978). However, it is not enough to know that BES or Head Start projects as a whole are successful or unsuccessful; rather, we need to identify project components, strategies, elements, and activities which have differentially beneficial attributes. An observation that children in a program outperform eligible children not in the program, reveals nothing about why the served students benefited or what might be done to improve the project. Clearly, therefore, program improvement at both the Federal and institutional levels requires careful specification of the processes contributing to desired outcomes. These specifications would form the basis of an effective evaluation, and only such specifications provide a sound foundation for policy action. "While it is important to know that 'good' programs elicit socially valued outcomes, this knowledge must be coupled with an awareness of what specific program characteristics are associated with child gains." (Collins, 1977, p. 178)

The second reason for measuring Implementation/Process variables is that it is not likely that the overall effect of BES compared either to Head Start or the control sample, or of Head Start to the control sample, will be dramatic (effect sizes greater than 1.0 standard deviation). Even given random assignment, control groups cannot be expected to be "no treatment" groups, as they might have been ten or fifteen years ago. This is not necessarily a negative condition for the evaluation--information can be gathered from the control group that will contribute to our knowledge of what processes are important, regardless of whether they occur in BES, in Head Start, in the alternative services used by the control group, or any combination of the three.

The examination of the program processes which children and families are experiencing is not an entirely new approach. Nearly all of the evaluations of Head Start have attempted to examine process when there has been access to the program. (The Westinghouse/Ohio and Head Start Transition Evaluations, to cite two examples, did not identify children until after the Head Start experience was over, and so could not look at process variables.) The evaluations of Home Start, Planned Variation Head Start, and Project Developmental Continuity, and the ETS Longitudinal Study, have collected varying amounts of program process information. However, the central question in these evaluations has been "Does the program have a positive effect for the participants?" The question of which process elements were important was secondary.

Variables of the component. Figure 1.3 shows the categories of variables which were examined in the Implementation/Process component of the conceptual framework. As was the case with the preceeding component, Determinants of Implementation, data has been gathered for most but not all variables identified. some of the variables listed under the "Curriculum: Intangible Resources" category have proved to be difficult to asses; thus far. Classroom

Figure 1.3

Variables Within the Implementation/Process Component
of the Conceptual Framework

General Characteristics of the Program

- Program options (part day, full day, home based, etc.)
- Enrollment
- Dropout patterns
- Adults present
- Schedules

Curriculum: Intangible Resources

- Program Emphasis
- Activities observed
- Teacher behaviors observed (CDA Checklist)
- Individualization
- Languages spoken
- Supervision
- Classroom climate
- Peer environment, Group mix
- Fidelity to model
- Degree of stability during the innovation phases
- Objectives
- Special needs

Curriculum: Tangible Resources

- Curriculum guides and materials
- Equipment, gacilities, and other resources (CDA Checklist)
- Group size
- Adult-child ratio

Parent Involvement/Continuity with the Home

- Parent roles
- Home visits
- Teacher-family contact

Continuity with the Elementary Schools

(no variables yet measured)

climate has not been directly assessed in the study as a whole. However a number of items relating to the socioemotional classroom climate in the Head Start classrooms were added to the observation system in the pilot study of the instrument, which was conducted at approximately the same time as the site visits. In addition, we have not addressed the variables dealing with the degree of stability of the program during innovation phases and degree of fidelity to a particular program model. Early in the study, these were thought to be important, especially since particular models were expected to be implemented in the BES programs. A shift of emphasis has occurred, however, which may make the investigation of these variables of less importance to ACYF, since no specified models are being replicated but curriculum developers are acting as consultants or facilitators to the BES programs. Therefore, questions of fidelity to model need to be reexamined. The degree of stability during the early phases of the project innovation may yet be pursued by the evaluation and ACYF.

Two other variables for which adequate items have not yet been developed are description of the group mix of children in the classroom and of the children with special needs within the classroom. A small number of items on the ACES observation system described the handicapping conditions observed within the classrooms. A further area of variables which the evaluation contractor recommends pursuing has to do with the peer environment (or group mix). NTS conceptualized this group of variables as being related to the child pretest scores and would deal with the average level of social competence in the group of children, the variance on those constructs within the classroom, and the shape of the distribution of those abilities within the classroom.

Instrumentation. Variables defined under this component were measured with the Program Description Interview, Center Description Interview, Teacher Interview and the ACES observation system, which can be found in Appendices A and B.

The observation system includes a lengthy checklist of teacher behaviors occuring during a full classroom day and a tangible resources checklist for equipment, materials and facilities available in the classroom. In addition, the observation system is a time sampling approach with teacher behaviors and child activities recorded every 15 minutes during a classroom day.

The data for this component was collected during the week-long site visit made by an NTS staff member to each of the programs in the evaluation. These staff members interviewed program staff and spent one to two classroom days observing in the program classrooms. The results of the data collection can be found in later sections of this report.

Component Three (and Four): Exposure/Opportunity to Benefit

Child Exposure/Opportunity to Benefit (and the fourth components, parallel, for parents) components are composed of parallel sets of domains: activity/time on activity, treatment group membership; child interaction; and program content/outcome measure overlap. This component focuses on the experiences of the individual child and interaction with other children and adults. The component is designed to allow precise measurement of the type and extent of the exposure the individual child receives to experiences promoting cognitive skills, oral language skills, large muscle development, social skills, etc.

Exposure/Opportunity to Benefit is a function both of resources available (e.g., Is there an individual math learning center in the classroom?) and of time on activity (e.g., How much time does a child spend at the math learning center?). Gains from experience with the learning center are determined also, of course, by the quality of the materials, the organization, their adaptability to the child's individual needs as a learner, the quality and extent of teacher and peer interaction during the experience, etc. The point is that resources

available and resources utilized are separate concepts which must be examined separately.

Child Exposure to Treatment/Opportunity to Benefit has been conceptualized in this study as the activities and resources available to a child in the classroom, the amount of time the child spends in the classroom (having a strong relationship to attendance patterns) and the level of engagement of the child in the activities. Level of engagement was measured during the data collection which has thus far taken place by observing children in the Head Start classrooms, identifying the activities in which they are participating, and rating the degree to which the child seems to be involved or not involved in the on-going activity. NTS believes that further pursuit of this measurement technique will yield useful measures of the child's utilization of the "treatment" available to him or her. Data collected during spring 1979 site visits were used to describe classrooms; data collected in future years will, in addition, focus on the individual child. These individual data can then be used in the interpretation of individual child outcome scores.

The variables in this component include: the activities in which a child participates, the amount of time a child spends in each activity, the size of the group in which the child participates in an activity, adult supervision during the activity, individualization of activities for the child, how the activity is chosen for the child, the pacing of the activity for the child, and the feedback received by the child. Also conceived of as part of this component are: child interactions with peers and adults and the role of the child in those interactions; the overlap between program content/objectives with the content of the outcome measures; and treatment group membership.

The components discussed above are those that we refer to as the "process" components. Data collected in relation to these components and their associated variables are the focus of this report. The following components are the "outcome" components; they are discussed here in order to complete the reader's picture of the conceptual framework.

Component Five: Child Outcomes

The desired outcome for children in Head Start has been stated repeatedly by Head Start program planners as "increased social competence." As the use of this term has evolved over time, it has come to be generally accepted to embrace the physical, cognitive, and emotional-motivational dimensions of child development (see, for example, OEO, 1965; Zigla, 1973; Gotts, 1973; OCD Improvement and Innovation, 1973; ACYF/RFP for BES Evaluation, 1978). Within the context of this evaluation, NTS has defined the domains of variables for measuring child outcomes as: cognitive skills, communication skills, factual knowledge, memory skills, perceptual/psychomotor skills, social skills, affect toward learning/school, and affect toward self. The process which NTS has gone through in defining these variables and selecting appropriate measures from existing instruments is detailed in Project Report 3, "Child Outcomes: Individual Testing Battery for the Fall 1979 Cohort."

Component Six: Parent Outcomes

The effectiveness of Head Start programs depends largely on the ability of the child's parents to provide classroom-home continuity in terms of learning situations and feedback, and to manage the home environment in a manner that minimizes stress on the child. Parents' educational, occupational, and socio-emotional aspirations for the child are also vital.

Parent outcomes, then, cannot parallel child outcomes, as they are much broader in scope; requiring NTS to measure program impact upon the parent

(1) within his/her culture and community, (2) in terms of program involvement and commitment, and (3) in his/her relationship with family and the target child. This comprehensive examination of the parent will allow identification of many aspects of program impact beyond the immediate child outcomes.

Process Data Collection Procedures

Thus far in the evaluation, NTS has designed instruments for and gathered information regarding all of the components of the conceptual framework, in varying degrees of completeness. During the site visits to the programs, which form the major focus of this report, the majority of the information collected pertained to the variables identified in the "process" components of the conceptual framework, **Determinants of Implementation, Implementation/Process,** and **Exposure/Opportunity to Benefit.** This information was gathered from program staff at the program, center, classroom and individual levels.

Instruments

During the first five months of the contract, NTS staff worked intensively with ACYF staff to develop the instruments for the collection of data during the following ten months of the study.[2]

Four measures comprised the data collection battery for Phase I, including three personal interviews and a classroom observation system. The interviews which were used are the: Program Description Interview; Center Description Interview; and the Teacher Interview. These can be found in Appendix A. The observational system is called the Alternative Classroom Environment Scale, and can be found in Appendix B.

Program Description Interview (PDI). The PDI is a personal interview administered to the program director of each program. The PDI describes the community, the program, the staff and the children served by Head Start.

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[2]The Implementation of the Study Design Report, (NTS, 1980) contains a complete description of the procedures used to develop these instruments.

It contributes information to component one of the Conceptual Framework (Determinants of Implementation) as shown in Figure 1-1. The variables it measures are many of those represented in Figure 1-2, such as community characteristics, characteristics of the Head Start program, and characteristics of the staff. The PDI requires about 45 minutes to administer.

Center Description Interview (CDI). The Center Description Interview is much like the PDI, except that its focus is a description of the centers in the Head Start programs. The CDI is administered personally to the center director or the person most knowledgable about the center. As with the PDI, the CDI contributes information which completes the Determinants of Implementation component of the Conceptual Framework. It contributes information which is more specific to the centers, however. The CDI describes the centers facilities, its staff and its children. In addition, the CDI contributes information to the Determinants of Implemantation component of the Conceptual Framework. It provides information about the services provided by the program, curriculum, parent activities and home-school continuity.

Teacher Interview (TI). The Teacher Interview is administered in a 45-60 minute individual session to the lead teacher in the study classrooms. The Teacher Interview contributes data within Conceptual Framework components 1 & 2. It provides a fuller description of the specific teaches regarding to the interview in the areas of teacher background and teacher attitudes. It also provides a description from the teachers viewpoint of the processes to which the children are exposed, such as the curriculum and classroom environment. The TI also provides a description of how individual teachers interact with parents.

Alternative Classroom Environment Scale (ACES). This observation system is composed of three instruments: the Teacher Behavior Checklist, the Tangible Resources Checklist and the Engaged/Allocated/Instructional Behaviors

observation system. The intent of the ACES is to describe the classroom process in different programs. It contributes to the Implementation/Process component of the conceptual framework (#2) by describing the environment which the child is exposed in the classroom. It provides a checklist for tangible as well as intangible resources in the classroom; and it measures selected teacher behaviors.

Data Collection Activities

The Phase I data collection was conducted at each site by NTS Durham staff who were hired and trained by the authors of the three interviews and the developers of the observation system. One trained staff member visited each site for a one week period during March, April and May of 1979. During this five day period, the site visitor discussed the evaluation with as many program staff as possible and accomplished a number of tasks including collection of all the Phase I data for each program. The major data collection activities were:

1. An interview with the program director, using the PDI.
2. An interview with the center director for one center in each program using the CDI.
3. Interviews with two teachers in the selected center using the TI.
4. Observation of an entire class day in each of the classrooms of the interviewed teachers using the ACES.

A typical week long site visit is represented in Figure 1-4.

Respondents

Within each program there were respondents identified prior to the site visit. At each site the director of the program responded to the PDI. He or she selected a center from the program and the site visitor interviewed the director of that center using the CDI. Within the selected center the center

director selected two teachers.[3] The site visitor interviewed these two teachers using the TI and observed in their classrooms using the ACES. The information collected during these site visits is reported in Chapter 3 of this volume. Detailed tables of the responses to each question and of the observations are contained in Appendices C through F.

[3]During this initial visit, evaluation staff left the choice of centers and classes to the program staff. This was done to reduce the stress of the initial visit, at a time when the Head Start programs were being asked to vouluntarily participate in the study. In the future, such choices will be made randomly by evaluation staff.

Figure 1.4

SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A SITE VISIT (January - May, 1980)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Presentation of Evaluation/Answer Questions	Data Collection	Presentation of Evaluation Data Collection	Data Collection	Wrap-up for the Week
Individual meeting with: Program Director	Observe in one Head Start classroom from time children arrive until they leave.	Obtain a copy of the PIR transfer into PDI	Observe in one Head Start classroom from time children arrive until they leave.	Meet with BES Coordinator and staff to discuss the week.
Center Director (Where appropriate)		Interview BES Coordinator and/or Program Director 30 minutes - 1 hour		
BES Coordinator		Interview Center Director or person appropriate to respond, 30 minutes - 1 hour		*Train local data collectors to contact and interview parents*
Grantee/Delegate Agency staff				
Elementary School Personnel	Interview teacher 45 minutes - 1 hour	Meet with staff members individually, if they desire, such as: education coordinator, parent involvement coordinator.	Interview teacher 45 min - 1 hour.	
Group Staff Meeting if desired.	Interview BES staff of elementary school(s), 1 hour		*Interview applicant for local data collectors and coordinators*	
Arrange meetings with anyone else the site would like informed of the evaluation.	*Interview applicants for local data collectors and coordinators*	Meet with parent group, if possible.		

CHAPTER 2

THE BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS EVALUATION

The major purpose of this report is to describe the Basic Educational Skills programs which were participating in both the demonstration programs and the evaluation during the 1978-79 program year. This description is in terms of the process data which has been gathered thus far in the study. Previous sections of this report have described the study as a whole. We turn now more specifically to the BES programs. Similar data was collected for the randomly selected regular Head Start programs which are also a part of this evaluation, and is presented in the companion report to this one, "Project Report 7, Description and Analysis of Program Data: Head Start Sample Programs".

Background of the Basic Educational Skills Evaluation

The background of the Basic Educational Skills Initiative was presented briefly in Chapter One. As stated there, the BES program was the result of a Secretarial initiative of HEW Secretary Joseph Califano in early 1978. The major goal of the program is to help children attain life skills, or to assist them in the acquisition of basic skills, which will enhance their school achievement. It is not a back-to-basics movement, nor does it mean that Head Start teachers will teach children school skills during preschool. Rather, it is a developmentally appropriate program to determine precursors to school-level activities and to assist children in developing these precursor skills. The Basic Educational Skills program was initiated in Head Start, but it does not limit itself to the Head Start years. It is meant to be incorporated into a

community in a total school manner. That is, the program recognizes the need for a continuous preschool-to-school experience for optimal learning. It is therefore meant to be implemented throughout the preschool and primary grades as a total program.

Basic Educational Skills is a program to provide communities, through Head Start Grantees, with funds so that they might implement the goals of the BES program, to enhance the acquisition of basic skills. Phase I of the program, which began in September 1978, provided this funding to 17 selected Head Start Grantees to supplement their existing programs. The funding was for implementation of locally-designed programs. In addition to the funding, ACYF provided technical assistance to these Grantees to help them refine their existing philosophies, methods and materials to meet the goals of BES. These programs were visited by NTS evaluation staff in Phase I data collection in the Spring of 1979.

In Phase II, (beginning in September of 1979) ACYF funded 16 additional programs to participate in BES. These programs will each receive training and technical assistance from one of four curriculum-development organizations selected by ACYF to serve as facilitators to these BES programs. These Grantees, of course, were not represented in the Spring 1979 site visits.

Selection of the BES Grantees

In early May 1978 the Phase I guidelines (Klein, 1978) were distributed to all 11 HEW Regional ACYF offices. The staff from these offices solicited proposals from Head Start programs in their regions which they felt could meet the eligibility criteria for a BES grant award. The guidelines specified the minimal requirements needed to respond to the call for proposals. They were listed as:

1. Grantee must operate a center based Head Start program for at least eight months per year.

2. Head Start classrooms and centers proposed for participation in this project must feed into no more than two elementary schools and they must be in the same school district.

3. Grantee must have a program that will enroll at least 60 children Phase II. If the grantee classrooms and centers proposed for participation during 1978 do not have at least 60 children four years of age who are expected to enter kindergarten the following year, the granteee must indicate as part of its application a willingness and specific plans to bring this about by the end of Phase I.

4. Grantee or delegate agencies must not be participating in any other Head Start research, demonstration or evaluation efforts that might confound this project's evaluation and research findings. The Head Start centers must not be involved with elementary schools participating in Project Follow Through.

By early June 1978 review panels were convened as a result of ACYF regional office recommendations. These review panels selected 30 prospective BES grantees from among the proposals which were submitted. The criteria upon which panel members based their recommendations were also laid out in the guidelines. They were:

1. Grantee must agree to serve as a replication model for other sites which entail many visitors and observers to the program, government publication and distribution of program materials, or other activities.

2. Grantee must be in compliance or shall have provided an acceptable plan for being in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards and must have a stated education philosophy, plan and curriculum, and an actively functioning Policy Council.

3. Grantees must demonstrate their capacity to provide an exemplary program of basic educational skills in each of the four program elements outlined in the guidelines (refer to guidelines, page 11) and will be given preference if they have classroom staff with a CDA credential, a BA in early childhood education and relevant field experience or who are participating in CDA training.

4. Grantee must have an education curriculum that focuses on developmentally appropriate Basic Educational Skills that are compatible with Head Start philosophy.

At the end of July, national and regional ACYF staff visited the 30 programs which had been identified by the panels as described above. By September 30, 1978, 17 such programs were chosen for BES funding. These are the programs which were site visited in Spring 1979 and composed the sample of respondents for this report. These 17 programs, by HEW Region, are listed below:

HEW Region	Grantee	Location
I	*Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.	East Boston, MA
I	Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.	Leominster, MA
II	Albany County Opportunity, Inc.	Albany, NY
III	*Head Start Of the Lehigh Valley/Colonial Northhampton Unit #20	Bethlehem, PA (Easton)
III	*Southwestern CAC, Inc.	Huntington, WV
IV	*Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee	Knoxville, TN
IV	*Collier County Public School	Naples, FL
V	*Lake County EOC, Inc.	Hammond, IN (Gary)
VI	*Albuquerque-Bernadillo County Economic Opportunity Board	Albuquerque, NM
VI	*Region 16 Educational Service Center	Amarillo, TX
VI	*ARVAC, Inc.	Russellville, AK
VII	*Shawnee County Community Assistance and Action, Inc.	Topeka, KS
IX	*Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors	Pleasant Hill, CA
IX	*Riverside County Schools	Riverside, CA
X	Seattle-King County Head Start	Seattle, WA
X	Washington Community College District #17	Spokane, WA
IMPD	*Red Lake Tribal Council	Red Lake, MN

*In September 1979, 13 of the original programs were funded again for the remainder of the BES program. These are the 13 continuing programs. This report deals with all of the original 17.

In addition to the 17 programs which were the respondents to Phase I data collection, there were 16 additional programs funded in September 1979 who underwent a similar review process. They were, of course, not represented in the sample which is the focus of this report, but they are listed below for informational purposes.

Phase II BES External Model Grantees

HEW Region	Grantee	Location
II	Hunts Point Coordinating Council, Inc.	Hunts Point, NY
III	Southwestern Community Action Committee, Inc.	Fairmont, WV
III	Greater Erie Community Action Committee, Inc.	Erie, PA
IV	Mississippi Action for Progress	Jackson, MS
IV	Anderson County Community Action Council	Oak Ridge, TN
V	Community Relations Social Development Commission	Milwaukee, WI
V	Community Action Program	Evansville, IN
V	Wayne County Intermediate School District	Inkster, MI
VI	Dallas County Community Action Program	Dallas, TX
VI	Muskogee Community Service Programs	Muskogee, OK
VII	Wichita Child Day Care Association	Wichita, KS
VIII	Sheridan School District, #2	Englewood, CO
IX	City of Phoenix Human Resource Department	Phoenix, AR
X	Educational Services District #105	Yakima, WA
IMPD	Southern UTE Community Action Program	Ignacio, CO
IMPD	Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	Eagle Butte, SD

The Basic Educational Skills program is a combination of a variety of approaches developed from within and outside Head Start. All of the present 29 BES programs will be represented in future BES evaluation activities.

The BES Network of Evaluation & Technical Assistance

There are a number of technical assistance and research organizations involved in the various facets of the BES program. Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts was under contract to ACYF at the time of the BES program planning and assisted ACYF in defining and refining the goals and components of the projects. CRC: Human Development and Learning of Cambridge, Massachusetts was awarded a contract during 1978-79 to provide technical assistance to the Phase I BES projects (the internal models) to implement their own models. (For 1979-80 the Center for CSPD Systems and Program Development of Washington, DC, has this contract.) In addition, four organizations with demonstrated early childhood curricula have been awarded contracts from ACYF to assist the Phase II projects (the externally-developed models) with the development of their BES programs. NTS Research Corporation is the evaluation contractor for Phase I and II of the program.

BES Program Elements

Phase I guidelines for the BES program (Klein, 1978) stated that the programs who were applying for BES grants "must have developed or clearly demonstrated the capacity to implement models that reflect four essential project elements which will be part of all Head Start educational programs for the entire duration research and demonstration initiative." These four elements are:

1) curriculum
2) parent involvement
3) teacher attitudes and behavior
4) continuity

In Abt's approach paper of January 1979, these four elements were further delineated.

Curriculum. Curriculum was defined as the experiences designed and delivered to children together with the plan by which this is accomplished and the rationale underlying the choices made. Included in the definition are three aspects of curriculum: content, classroom process, and environment. Content is defined as the skills to be taught. Process is the teacher behavior and the staff/child interaction patterns in the classroom. Environment encompasses the physical space, equipment, materials and group composition. NTS's conceptualization of curriculum placed these variables into the framework of tangible and intangible resources to curriculum.

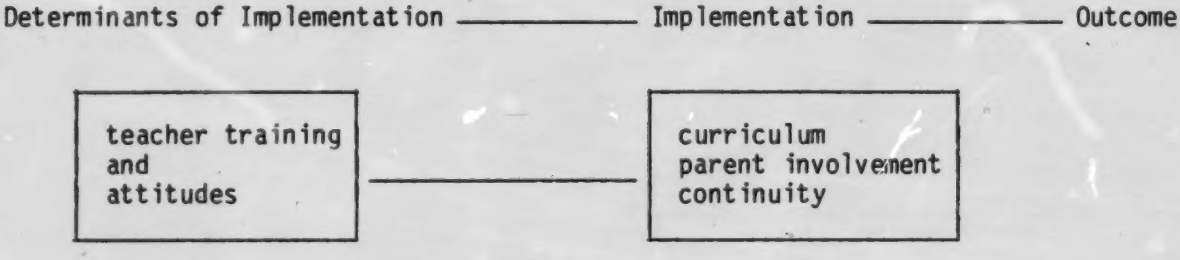
Parent involvement. Parent involvement is defined as the involvement of parents in activities in Head Start, the elementary school and the home to promote their children's acquisition of developmentally appropriate educational skills. This differs from the usual emphasis on parent involvement in Head Start in that it focuses on parent involvement specifically for the enhancement of the parental role as the principal educator for the child. Parent involvement could be accomplished in any of five ways: (1) through classroom involvement; (2) through involvement in the design of the curriculum; (3) through work with their own children and a staff member; (4) through work with their own children on their own; and (5) through participation in decisionmaking tasks regarding activities, materials and curriculum for the programs.

Teacher behavior, attitudes. This element of the program focuses on the need for all staff to share and represent an awareness of the program's goals, objectives and underlying educational principles. As central players in the BES program, staff are expected to assume a major role in implementing the goals of the program. This can be accomplished through education of the staff about child development, appropriate behavior, and attitudes toward children.

Continuity. As a program element continuity means coordination between Head Start, the school and the home in providing the child with a planned sequence of learning experiences. The BES program hopes to enhance communication within the program and between the Head Start staff and the staff of the elementary schools, and between both staffs and the parents in order to ensure a continuous experience for the children.

The BES Program Elements and the Conceptual Framework

The BES program elements are represented in NTS's conceptual framework as described in Chapter One, in the Determinants of Implementation, and the Implementation/Process components. As stated in Chapter One, a conceptual framework like this one provides a clustering and sequencing of variables. The program elements represent some of those variables which deal with why and how the programs are implemented. Of course, this is the purpose for which they were intended -- to guide programs in how to implement the BES program. The NTS framework does not limit itself, however, to how and why the program is implemented, but includes in addition the outcomes of the program's implementation. Schematically the framework and the program elements could be represented like this:



Of course, this is a simplistic representation of the framework. NTS's conceptualization of the study also includes variables which affect the child and family which are outside of Head Start and variables which describe how an individual or family partakes of the program. This representation indicates where the BES program elements fit into the conceptual framework.

In the following chapter, the process data which was collected in 1979 for the 17 BES programs will be presented. The presentation will be organized by the components of the conceptual framework, with a discussion of the BES elements within each section.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS: BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS PROCESS DATA

The initial chapters of this report describe the site visits to the BES demonstration programs by NTS staff members, which were conducted in March, April and May, 1979.[1] With this section, we begin to discuss the data gathered during those site visits. The variables which are defined as Determinants of Implementation are presented first not only because they comprise the first component of the conceptual framework (described in Chapter 1) but also because the information contained here provides a good overview of the BES programs involved in the study.

Determinants of Implementation

Determinants of Implementation are those factors which affect, both positively and negatively, the implementation of Head Start programs at the program or center level; they are the variables which help to shape the program. The variables discussed in this section are grouped into three broad categories: Characteristics of the Community, Characteristics of the Program and Centers, and Characteristics of the Head Start staff, including training and staff attitudes (a BES program element).

Characteristics of the Community

Seventeen BES programs were visited in this phase of the study. According to the program directors interviewed, the catchment areas for the majority of the programs (58 percent) are either a city or a city/county combination. Only

[1] A more thorough description of the site visit procedures is contained in Project Report 9, Volume 2, Implementation of the Study Design: Logistics.

twelve percent of the programs serve an area described as a county, while an additional 24 percent serve multiple counties [Table PDI-2].[2]

Community resources. BES center directors were asked about the availability in their communities of a number of categories of community resources. [Tables CDI-30a through 30k] Of the eleven categories of resources listed, ten were available in at least 70 percent of the communities (public health clinics, mental health clinics, speech therapy clinics, psychological services, family counseling agencies, family planning services, nutrition services, hospitals, community work and training programs, and housing authorities). The other resource on the list was child guidance clinics (available to 53 percent of the programs).

The educational arrangements available within the community for five year olds was another community resource discussed with center directors. While only 29 percent of the BES programs are in communities where there is mandatory public kindergarten, 71 percent of the communities do have public kindergartens available. Eighty-eight percent of the center directors also reported the availability of private kindergartens. Seventy-seven percent reported public day care available for five year olds. Fifty-eight percent said there was a private day care available for five year olds. In 53 percent of the BES programs, five year olds are able to continue in Head Start [Table CID-17].

Characteristics of BES Head Start Programs and Centers

The delegate agencies sponsoring the BES programs are categorized by type of agency as shown in Table 3.1 [from Table PDI-1]. Consistent with sponsorship of programs by the public school systems, 58 percent of the BES centers visited during the site visits were located in school buildings [Table CDI-1].

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[2]NOTE: When tables are referred to in the text with a combination of letters and numbers, the tables are contained in the Appendices. For example, "PDI-2" refers to the table for responses to item 2 on the Program Description Interview, which is contained in Appendix C. The appendices contain tables for each item of each instrument: Program Description Interview, Center Description Interview, Teacher Interview and ACES observation system.

Table 3.1

Types of Delegate Agencies Sponsoring the BES Programs
(N = 17 programs)

Type of Agency	Percent of the Delegate Agencies
Local community Action Agency	24
City	0
School System	35
Institution of Higher Learning	12
Private Non-Profit Organization	6
Other	18

Children and families served. The ethnic composition of the groups of children served by the BES programs in this study are described in Table PDI-10. The average percentages in the programs of the major ethnic groups identified for the purposes of this study were: White, not of Hispanic origin, 53 percent; Black, not of Hispanic origin, 24 percent; Hispanic, 18 percent: Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 percent; and American Indian/Alaskan Native, 4 percent.

In the centers where the NTS site visitor conducted classroom observations during the site visit (which represent a subset of the program's classrooms), the ethnic composition of the children was as follows: an average of 41 percent White, 31 percent Black, 18 percent Hispanic, 1 percent Pacific Islanders/Asian, and 8 percent American Indian/Native Alaskan. Within these centers, an average of 3 children (3 percent) speak a language other than English as their primary language. Seventy-three percent of these children speak Spanish as their primary language [Tables CDI-11 and CDI-12].

The BES programs serve an average of 292 children ranging in age from three years to six years. Sixty-eight percent of the children are four-year-olds; 22 percent are three-year olds; 9 percent are five-year-olds; and less than one percent are six-year-olds [Table PDI-11].

Center directors were asked how far from the center the majority of the families served by their center lived. Twenty-four percent of the families in

these centers live less than two miles from the center: 59 percent live two to five miles from the center; and 18 percent live more than five miles from the center [Table CDI-2]. In these centers parents usually drive the children to Head Start or the child walks [Table CDI-3].

In the centers observed during the site visits, there were an average of seven classrooms per center, with a range of 2 to 20. Total center enrollment averaged 97 children, with a range from 31 to 347 [Tables CDI-5 and CDI-8]. Average daily attendance at the centers visited was 88 children, or 91 percent [Table CDI-9]. Centers in the study had had an average of 9 dropouts from the program from the beginning of the program year until March 1, 1979 [Table CDI-10].

Program admissions. Center directors were asked to identify the ways in which parents most often find out about their programs. The centers recruit parents most often by word-of-mouth, or parents enroll children because an older child in the family had been in Head Start [Table CDI-14]. A majority of the center directors also cited other recruitment techniques, such as door-to-door recruitment; radio, television, or newspaper ads; and posters in housing projects, grocery stores, and other meeting places.

Programs appear to vary a great deal in the ways in which they decide on admissions and the means by which they come to establish their admissions policies. We asked center directors how the program decides whom to serve if they are unable to serve all of the eligible families who apply. Six percent of the center directors said they are able to accept all eligible applicants. The remaining center directors named the considerations shown in Table 3.2 as primary elements of their decision making [from Table CDI-15]. The major criteria appear to be lowest income and handicaps. According to center directors, the individuals and groups in Table 3.3 have contributed to the admissions policy

[from Table CDI-16], the most often-named contributors being program directors and parent advisory groups.

Table 3.2

How Programs Decide Whom to Serve
(N = 17 programs)

Admission Criteria	Percent of Programs Considering This a Primary Element
Lowest income first	88
First-come/first-served	71
Handicapped Children	82
Older Head Start Siblings	47
Large Variety of Program-specific Criteria	41

Table 3.3

Persons Involved in Setting Admissions Policy
(N = 17 programs)

Contributors to Admissions Policy	Percent of BES Programs
Grantee Agency Policy	6
Program Directors	71
Center Directors	24
Teachers	12
Other Staff	47
Parent Advisory Committees	82

Staff communication. Center directors were asked about the frequency of their contact and communication with: their program director, other center directors, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and most parents. Their responses are shown in Tables CDI-29a through CDI-29e. According to their responses, most center directors see their program directors, their teaching staff and their non-teaching staff almost daily. They seldom see other center directors as often as once a week: they see parents approximately once a week or

less frequently. It appears that a majority of the center directors' contact is of a nature which facilitates management of the center rather than direct contact with the children or parents.

The kinds of contact and communication between the Head Start program and the public schools is of interest to this study, particularly in the context of the Basic Educational Skills demonstration programs. Center directors were asked about their communication with public school officials. None of the BES center directors reported "little or no communication" with the public schools. According to these center directors, the issues shown in Table 3.4 are discussed at least occasionally with public school staff [from Table CDI-23]. All of the items in the table would appear to be critical elements of continuity between Head Start and school, and are fortunately discussed in large numbers of programs.

Table 3.4

Program Issues Discussed Between Center Directors and Public School Officials (N = 17 Center Directors)

Issues Discussed	Percent of Centers Reporting
Funding	65
Staff training	82
Parent involvement	82
Curriculum	94
Individual children	77

Adoption strategies. As was discussed in the previous section on the conceptual framework, the strategies by which programs go about making decisions on program approach and adopting curriculum changes are critical variables in studying the determinants of how programs are implemented. Both center directors and teachers were interviewed on this topic. Interestingly, center directors and teachers do not entirely agree on the question. Thirty-five percent of

the center directors say the teacher alone decides on the teaching approach and materials to use in the classroom, compared with 63 percent of the teachers. Sixty-five percent of the center directors report that the teacher has assistance in making these decisions, while only 28 percent of the teachers reported that they had such assistance [Tables CDI-60a and TI-66]. When asked what individuals other than the center director and teacher are involved in the decision regarding the teaching approach or materials, center directors and teachers answered as shown in Table 3.5 [from Tables CDI-60b and TI-67].

Table 3.5

Personnel Besides Teachers and Center Directors who are Involved in Curriculum Decisions

Contributor	Percent as Reported by Center Directors	Percent as Reported by Teachers
Program Director	59	15
Education Coordinator	65	30
Head Teacher	59	5
Teachers as a Group	65	-
Aides	53	10
Parents	47	5
Public School Staff	12	0

Characteristics of the BES Head Start Staff

A number of staff characteristics are thought to shape the program process which is experienced by the children and families. That is, both NTS and ACYF expect that certain descriptive characteristics of the staff members who are implementing the program will influence the ways in which they implement that program. Discussed in this section are the characteristics of the Head Start staff members of the BES projects in this study sample. Some of the information was obtained directly from the staff members in interviews and classroom observa-

tions. Other information concerns the program and/or center staff as a whole, and was described by the program directors and the center directors in the interviews. The following categories of characteristics are discussed here: ethnicity; prior experience; age; training and education, including preservice and inservice training; and teacher attitudes. Some of the variables presented here could conceivably be placed in the description of the program process which is the next major section of this report. We are making a distinction, however, between the program characteristics which describe classroom experience of children (next section) and those program characteristics which do not describe the classroom experience of children but which do influence that classroom experience (this section). Therefore, a decision has been made to present the staff characteristics in this section, the determinants of implementation.

Ethnicity and language spoken. Of the individual staff members listed by program directors on their program staff rosters, 61 percent were White/not of Hispanic origin; 19 percent were Black/not of Hispanic origin; 13 percent were Hispanic; 1 percent Pacific Islander; and 6 percent American Indian/Native Alaskan [Table 3.6 below and Table PDI-4]. Within each program visited, one center was selected for interviewing teachers and observing classrooms. The directors of these centers were also interviewed. The composition of staff members listed by center directors on their center staff rosters did not differ greatly from percentages just given for program staffs as a whole, except for a higher percentage of Black staff in the centers. Within these centers, 55 percent of the staff were White, not of Hispanic origin; 29 percent Black, not of Hispanic origin; 6 percent Hispanic; and 6 percent American Indian [see Table 3.6 below and Table CDI-20b]. Program directors and center directors were also asked to report on their staff roster any languages other than English spoken by program staff. Within the programs in this study, 31 of the 212 staff members, or about 15 percent, speak Spanish, and 5 percent speak an American Indian

language. Another two percent speak a European or Asian language [Tables PDI-12d and CDI-20q]. The languages which teachers actually speak in the classroom are reported in the chapter on program process, which follows, and can be found in Table TI-20.

Table 3.6

Ethnicity of Center and Program Staff
(N = 17 programs, 17 centers)

	Percent of All Program Staff	Percent of All Center Staff
White, not of Hispanic Origin	61	55
Black, not of Hispanic Origin	19	29
Hispanic	13	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1
American Indian/Native Alaskan	6	6

Teacher age. The average age of the 29 teachers interviewed during the BES site visits was 38 years, with a range from 24 years to 58 years [Table TI-3].

Previous experiences and education. Previous work, education, and Head Start experiences were explored with the teachers interviewed. Twenty-eight percent of the teachers interviewed have had children in Head Start in the past, or presently have a child in Head Start [Table TI-1]. Of those, 56 percent report that they began working with Head Start as a result of their experience as a Head Start parent [Table TI-2]. On the program staff roster, 91 percent of the staff listed were employed full time in the Head Start project and 6 percent were employed part time [Table PDI-12a]. Of the staff on the center staff roster, 79 percent were employed full time in the center, 17 percent part time, and none were classified as CETA/WIN. Of teachers interviewed as part of the program site visit, 94 percent were employed full time by their Head Start programs, and only 6 percent were part time employees [Tables CDI-20as, CDI-20e, and TI-22]. These teachers had been working with their Head Start programs an

average of seven years. Twenty-two percent of the teachers interviewed were designated head teachers, and 72 percent were designated teachers [Table TI-23a].

Educational background. Of particular interest to ACYF is the CDA status of program staff, as well as the bachelor's degree in early childhood education. These characteristics are described in Table 3.7 below. Among the total Head Start staffs of the BES programs, 15 percent have received CDA certification, and six percent have Bachelor's degrees in early childhood education [Table PDI-5].

Table 3.7

CDA and BA Status of Program, Center and Interviewed Staff
(N = 17 programs, 17 centers, 32 teachers)

Background Category	Percent of Staff Members in BES Programs	Percent of Teachers in Selected Centers	Percent of Teachers Interviewed
BA in Early Childhood	6		
CDA Credential	15	13	47
Enrolled in CDA Training		21	31

Among the program staff within the selected centers, 13 percent have attained the CDA Credential and 21 percent are currently enrolled in CDA training [Table CDI-20d]. Of the teachers interviewed, 47 percent have CDA certificates and 31 percent are currently working on CDA certificates [Tables TI-8].[3] Of those teachers who have received their CDA certificate, the average length of time which they have been certified is two years [Table TI-7].

As can be seen in Table 3.8 below, of program staff as a whole, 18 percent have completed a Masters Degree, an additional 27 percent have completed a

[3] Since, for this data collection, program directors were asked to choose the centers and teachers who would be the subject of interviews and observation, it is clear that they chose centers and teachers which they believed to be above average, especially in regard to CDA status.

Bachelors Degree, another 13 percent an Associate Degree, and none had completed less than high school [Table PDI-12b]. Among the staffs of the selected centers, 8 percent of the staff have a Masters Degree, 20 percent a Bachelors Degree, an additional 11 percent an Associate Degree, 34 percent High School diplomas, and 5 percent had completed less than high school [Table CDI-20c]. Twenty-two percent of the teachers interviewed are currently enrolled in a formal education program [Table TI-10]. Asked to identify their major fields in the degree program in which they are currently enrolled, 57 percent identified Early Childhood Education, and 29 percent Child Development [Table TI-11].

Work experience. Individual teachers were asked about their prior work experience. The teachers interviewed had been with their Head Start programs an average of seven years, ranging from less than one year to thirteen years [Table TI-21]. Forty-seven percent of the teachers had had other jobs in their Head Start program before becoming a Head Start teacher, and 67 percent of those having previous jobs with the program had been working as a teacher aide [Tables TI-27, TI-28 and TI-29]. The teachers had also worked at a variety of other

Table 3.8

Educational Status of Program, Center, and Interviewed Staff

	Percent of all Program Staff (N=17 programs)	Percent of All Center Staff (N=17 centers)	Percent of Interviewed Teachers (N=32 teachers)
Less than high school	0	5	3
Completed high school	36	34	25
Associate Degree (2 years)	13	11	9
Bachelor's Degree	27	20	34
Master's Degree	18	8	9
Ph.D.	1	0	0

educational organizations. Three percent had worked at other Head Start programs, 47 percent had worked at preschools other than Head Start, 38 percent had worked in kindergartens, 50 percent in grades one through three, 28 percent in grades four through six, and 6 percent in secondary schools [Table TI-29].

In addition to the full time Head Start staff members, the BES Head Start programs in this sample receive services from a number of other professionals as listed below: [from Table CDI-22]

Table 3.9

Individuals Other Than Head Start Staff
Who Provide Services to the BES Centers
(N = 17 centers)

Professional Category	Percent of Head Start Programs Receiving Services
Speech Therapists	94
Physicians	59
Dentists	77
Psychologists	88
Social Workers	59
Nurses	59
Occupational Therapists	12
Other	18

The services of these professionals are provided by their delegate agency (35 percent), the Head Start grantee agency (41 percent), the local school system (41 percent), and through private organizations and individuals (47 percent) [Table CDI-22a].

Preservice Training. One hundred percent of the BES programs offered preservice training before the program year began in the fall of 1978. The average preservice training session was six days long (ranging from two to eighteen days) and consisted of an average of 36 hours of training (ranging from twelve to ninety hours) [Tables CDI-31, CDI-32, and CDI-33]. As can be seen in Table

CDI-35, nearly every category of program personnel participated in the preservice training, including Head Start teachers, classroom aides, volunteer classroom aides, program administrators, program coordinators, and parents, but no public school teachers. The topics dealt with in the preservice training sessions are shown in Table CDI-36b. Topics discussed by 70 percent or more of the programs were: planning classroom activities, parent involvement, general program operations, services to the handicapped, social services, and teaching methods.

The information above regarding the preservice training sessions was obtained from interviewing center directors. Individual teachers were also asked about preservice training sessions. Eighty-eight percent of the teachers took advantage of the preservice training sessions before the start of the program year. Of those who participated in training, the average number of days spent in preservice training was five and the average number of hours they spent in preservice training was 33, agreeing well with the reports of the center directors [Tables TI-46, TI-47, and TI-48]. Teachers reported a high degree of satisfaction with the preservice training. Fourteen percent said they were "extremely satisfied", and 54 percent were "very satisfied" [Table TI-53a].

Inservice training. Ninety-four percent of the BES center directors reported that their programs had regularly scheduled times for inservice training. The programs had held an average of four inservice training sessions during the month previous to the site visit (with a range from 4 to 11 sessions) [Tables CDI-40 and CDI-41]. In these inservice training sessions, teachers had spent an average of 11 hours during the previous month, with a range from 5 to 20. Again, the persons attending inservice training sessions represented a range of program personnel: teachers, paid aides, volunteer aides, program coordinators and parents, but no public school staff [Tables CDI-42 and CDI-43].

Topics discussed at the inservice training sessions tended to be very similar to the topics reported above for preservice training [Table CDI-44]. Seventy-two percent of the teachers interviewed reported that they had attended inservice training sessions during that program year. Of those teachers who had attended inservice training sessions, the average number of sessions a teacher attended in the past month was five and the average number of hours spent in inservice training in that month was 14 [Tables TI-54, TI-55 and TI-56]. The teachers' satisfaction with their inservice training sessions was even higher than that reported for preservice training, with 20 percent reporting that they had been "extremely satisfied" and 52 percent reporting "very satisfied" with the inservice training sessions [Tables TI-62a and TI-62b].

Teacher attitudes (a BES program element). The teachers who were interviewed as part of the study were asked to consider each of sixteen statements regarding the role of parents in the education of their child and in the preschool program. They were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. This was an attempt to get an indication of the teachers' overall attitudes toward parent involvement in early childhood education. The sixteen statements and the teachers' responses to them are shown in Appendix A (Teacher Interview) and in Tables TI-83a through TI-83p. A common experience with attitude scales of this nature is that people do not use the two extremes of the scale--whether a three point, five point or seven point scale. Instead, the choices between the two extremes are much more commonly chosen to express people's attitudes. It may be that there is a human tendency not to express opinions in extremes. However, interestingly enough, the group of teachers interviewed in this study showed an overwhelming tendency to "strongly agree" with statements which would indicate that the parent had a very important role in educating the child and to "strongly disagree" with statements which

indicated that the parents should not interfere with the preschool education of their child. For example, ninety-four percent of the BES teachers interviewed strongly agreed with the statement, "Parents can teach children many things that will help them in Head Start." Eighty-eight percent of the teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, "There is little parents should do about preschool practice and policies." Ninety-four percent of the teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, "Once a child is in school, there is little a parent could do at home to help educate him/her."

There were, however, a few items on which teachers did not seem to have such strong unanimous opinions. Most of these had to do with whether or not teachers and parents should tell each other how to help their children. For example, only 28 percent of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement, "Parents want me to tell them how to help their children." And only 38 percent strongly disagreed, 34 percent mildly disagreed, and 13 percent mildly agreed with the statement, "Once a child is in the preschool, it is the preschool's responsibility for his/her education" [Tables TI-83a through 83p]. Teachers were split (31 percent strongly disagreed, 16 percent strongly agreed) in their belief that, because of the teachers' training and experience, parents should not try to tell them how to teach [Tables TI-83a through TI-83p].

Implementation/Process Variables

This section contains information regarding the actual program process, as experienced by the children and families within the BES Head Start programs. (The identification of variables for this component of the conceptual framework was described in Chapter One.) First, a general description of the programs is given, including a discussion of the schedules which the programs and teachers follow. Then the nature of the curricula of the programs is described, as seen by the NTS visitors and described by program staff. The curricula are described

first in terms of the intangible resources available to the programs (the curriculum emphases, the role behavior of the teachers, and the supervision of the teachers). A discussion of the tangible resources portion of the curricula follows, which describes the curriculum and diagnostic materials used, and the equipment and facilities available to each classroom. The final sections discuss the parent involvement component of the BES programs, and the level of continuity between the Head Start programs and the elementary schools.

General Characteristics of the Programs

Program options. The majority of the BES Head Start programs in this sample offer part-day class sessions only (53 percent), while 24 percent offer full-day sessions only, and an additional 24 percent offer both part-day and full-day classes [Table PDI-3]. Eighteen percent of the programs offer home-based program options to their families. Twenty-nine percent of the programs operate morning and afternoon (double) sessions [Table CDI-4]. Among the programs offering full-day classes, the average program operates 5 centers and 7 classrooms. Their average total hours of classroom operation per day is 8. Among the part-day programs, the average program operates 7 centers, and 11 classrooms, and is in operation for an average of 5 hours per day [Tables PDI-7 and 8].

Enrollment. As shown in Table 3.10 below, the BES Head Start programs in this sample had an average enrollment of 292 children in 1978-79, with an enrollment range from 92 to 741 [from Table PDI-9]. The average number of children per classroom was 22.5. The average program had had a total of 36 dropouts (12 percent) by April 1 of the program year, with a range from 0 to 130 dropouts. Less than 7 percent of the children in these programs were from families with incomes above the Head Start eligibility guidelines. The average program serves 197 four-year-olds, 64 three-year-olds, 25 five-year-olds and

1 six-year-old [from Table PDI-11].

Table 3.10

Enrollment of BES Head Start Programs in the Evaluation
(N = 17 programs)

Enrollment	Total	Range	Average
Actual	4968	92-741	292
Planned	4866	96-761	286
Above the poverty line	344	0-077	20
Dropouts by April	571	0-130	36
Four-year-olds	3137	---	197

Adults present. Thirty-two classrooms were observed for a period of one day each during the one-week site visits to the BES programs. At least two adults were present in every classroom observed, and the average adult/child ratio was 1 to 5 [Table ACES-2J]. Information about the adults and children in the observed classes is summarized in Table 3.11, below. Nearly all the adults in the classroom were women; only 7 percent were men. Twenty-one percent of the adults were Black, 13 percent Hispanic and 53 percent White. Note that these percentages for adults match almost exactly the corresponding ethnic percentages among children in those classrooms [see Table PDI-10]. Of those adults who were not the classroom's lead teacher, 57 percent were identified as an Assistant Teacher or a Teacher's Aide [Table ACES-2I]. The other 43 percent fell into numerous other categories, including Parent Volunteer. In the observed classrooms, 20 percent of the lead teachers were Black, 13 percent were Hispanic, and 50 percent were White. Among the assistant teachers in the observed classrooms, 19 percent were Black, 14 percent Hispanic and 52 percent White.

Table 3.11

Adults and Children Present in Observed Classes*
(N = 32 classes)

	Total	Average Number Per Classroom	Percent of Total
Number of Adults Present	100	3.3	-
Sex of Adults Present			
Male	7	.2	7
Female	93	2.9	89
Ethnicity of Adults Present			
White, not of Hispanic origin	55	1.7	53
Black, not of Hispanic origin	22	.7	21
Hispanic	13	.4	13
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	.1	4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	8	.3	8
Number of Children Present	533	16.7	-
Sex of Children Present			
Male	273	8.5	51
Female	260	8.1	49
Age of Children Present			
2	4	.1	<1
3	53	1.7	10
4	343	10.7	64
5	122	3.8	23
6	11	.3	2
Ethnicity of Children Present			
White, not of Hispanic origin	232	7.3	44
Black, not of Hispanic origin	139	4.3	26
Hispanic	89	2.8	17
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	.3	2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	27	.8	5
Number of Children Identified As Handicapped	109	3.4	20

*Information in this table is taken from Tables ACES 2A through 5 (Appendix F).

Schedules. Teachers were asked to report some basic information about their daily, weekly, and monthly schedules. Thirty-two teachers were interviewed in the BES programs visited. According to these teachers' reports, an average of 30 percent of the classroom day is spent in teacher-directed activities, 26 percent is spent in child-selected activities, 17 percent in caregiving activities, and 13 percent in meals; and the teachers spend 12 percent of their time doing planning [Table TI-32]. Table 3.12 summarizes the numbers of hours that teachers spend in specified activities, other than in the classroom with children, in an average month [from Table TI-33a].

Note that teachers report that administration and paperwork is the single category on which they spend the most hours (an average of 17 hours per month). The four activities which receive the next highest number of hours per month are "talking with other staff about individual parents or children" (14 hours per month); "talking with parents individually at the center" (11 hours per month); "giving training in a one-to-one situation" (8 hours per month); "making home visits" (6 hours per month); and "talking with program coordinators individually" (6 hours per month).

The teachers were also asked whether they have regularly scheduled times for a number of specified activities. Seventy-five percent reported that they have a regularly scheduled time for meeting with their program coordinators in a group setting, while only 22 percent of them said that they have such time with their program coordinators individually. Among the activities for which only a few teachers had regularly scheduled periods were: providing social services (12 percent); providing health services (9 percent); and driving children or parents to Head Start or Head Start activities (9 percent) [Table TI-33b].

Table 3.12

In An Average Month, the Number of Hours Teachers Spend in Non-Classroom Activities
(N = 32 teachers)

Activities	Number of Hours Average	Range
Talking with parents individually at the center	11	1-52
Attending parent meetings	2	0-16
Talking with other staff about individual parents or children	14	0-56
Meeting with program coordinators in a group setting	6	0-24
Talking with program coordinators individually	4	0-10
Providing social services, for example, making phone calls for referrals to a social service agency	2	0-10
Providing health services, for example, assisting parents to get medical or dental services for their children	2	0-10
Driving children or parents to Head Start or to Head Start activities	2	0-40
Giving training in a group setting	1	0-12
Giving training in a one-to-one situation	8	0-40
Performing administrative tasks or paperwork	17	0-40
Making home visits	6	0-32

Curriculum: Intangible Resources (a BES program element)

In discussing the curriculum (a BES program element), we have divided the information into two areas. The first deals with the intangibles of the curriculum (the behaviors of the adults, their supervision, and the emphases which the teachers and curriculum builders have chosen for their program). We deal

separately with the tangible resources of the curriculum, which include the facilities, equipment and materials available to these children and the adults in the classroom. This section, then, deals with the intangible portions of the curriculum.

Emphasis. Center directors and classroom teachers were asked to consider a list of developmental categories and were asked to rank each category according to which ones they felt were most emphasized in the classes in their center or being taught by them, respectively. The list included sensory motor development, language development, group and social skills development, concept development, academic skills development, self-esteem development and motivational development.

The responses of center directors and teachers are shown in Table 3.13 [from Tables CDI-61 and TI-64]. The area of emphasis ranked highest by both center directors and teachers was Self-Esteem Development, followed by both Group and Social Skills Development and Language Development. This emphasis on

Table 3.13

Rankings of Developmental Categories Teachers Emphasize, According to Center Directors and Teachers

	According to Center Directors (N=17)		According to Teachers (N=32)	
Area of Emphasis	Number of Times Ranked First	Average Ranking	Number of Times Ranked First	Average Ranking
Sensory Motor Development	0	5	0	5
Language Development	2	3	9	3
Group and Social Skills	4	3	5	3
Concept Development	0	5	2	5
Academic Development	0	6	1	6
Self-Esteem Development	9	1	14	2
Motivational Development	1	5	1	4

self-esteem and social skills is highly consistent with ACYF expectations that these areas are believed to be more appropriate for the developmental level of three- and four-year olds than more academically-oriented areas.

No center directors ranked the following areas first: Sensory Motor Development, Concept Development, and Academic Development. Only one center director ranked Motivational Development first. Academic Development, Sensory Motor Development and Motivational Development were ranked first by only one or fewer teachers.

Intent. Every curriculum is guiged by some intent or philosophy. Center directors and teachers were asked to share their opinions about how a classroom should operate. They were asked to read descriptions of five classrooms (see Appendix A), each of which represented a particular curriculum philosophy or teaching style, and pick the one which most closely resembled their own. The classroom descriptions have been judged by experts to represent: an open classroom with emphasis on the whole child; a classroom with developmentally sequenced activities, with emphasis on individual children; a structured classroom with emphasis on academics; a classroom with child-directed activities, with emphasis on self-instructional materials; and a Piagetian approach, with emphasis on reasoning. Center directors were asked to pick the one which most described the classrooms in their center, and teachers were asked to select the one which most described their own classroom. Directors and teachers could also elect to say that none of the descriptions was appropriate to their classrooms. As can be seen in Table 3.14 [from Tables CDI-58 and TI-63], the classroom most often selected by both center directors and classroom teachers, by an overwhelming margin, was Classroom Description #2, "Developmentally sequenced activities, with emphasis on individual children." Fifty-nine percent of the center directors and sixty-two percent of the teachers chose that classroom description.

Table 3.14

Center Director and Teacher Selections of Classroom Descriptions

Classroom Description	Center Directors (N=17) Number of Center Directors	Center Directors (N=17) Percent	Teachers (N=32) Number of Teachers	Teachers (N=32) Percent
Open Classroom, emphasis on "Whole" child	1	6	2	6
Developmentally sequenced activities. emphasis on individual children	10	59	20	62
Structured classroom, emphasis on academics	0	0	2	6
Child Directed, emphasis on self-instructional materials	0	0	1	3
Piagetian approach, emphasis on reasoning	1	6	4	12
None of the above describes classroom	4	24	3	9

None of the other descriptions was chosen by more than six percent of the center directors; and only the Piagetian approach, Classroom Description #5, was chosen by as many as 12 percent of the teachers.

Observation. Much insight into the intangible curriculum which the children experience in a BES Head Start classroom can be gained by looking at the results of the observations of 32 classrooms conducted during the NTS site visits to the programs. Observers remained in each classroom for a full classroom day, from arrival of the children to departure. Every 15 minutes, the observer recorded which categories of activities had been taking place (and recorded some aspects of group size and child behavior, reported above, and in a later section).

Activities observed. A first attempt at categorizing observed activities is shown in Table 3.15, below, and is referred to here as "allocated time." This table is a summary of more detailed information available in Tables ACES-7A through 7G (which contain both minutes and percent of classroom day). As can be seen in Table 3.15, the single category of activities on which the most time is spent in a BES class is Free Play (50 minutes per day). Second is Cognitive/academic activity (defined as those activities in which teachers or other adults were focusing on concepts, reasoning, or language); and the third most-time-spent category is Meals/Snacks (nutrition is an important Head Start component). It will be necessary to arrive at finer distinctions in activities before we can determine whether the time spent in the classroom is consistent with teachers' stated emphases. An interesting pattern emerges when the classes observed are divided into two groups--classes with naps and classes without naps. After completing site visits but before the data had been examined, it had been the impression of the site visitors that the differences between these two groups of classes related almost entirely to time spent in napping (of course) and in free play (with a small difference, perhaps, in meal time). However, as can be seen in Table 3.15, one of the largest differences in number of minutes spent in a type of activity (other than naps) is in cognitive/academic activities; the children in classes with naps have an average of 19 minutes more of cognitive/academic activities per day than do children in classes without naps (55 minutes compared with 36). Other major differences are in transition time (26 minutes more in classes with naps), Meals/snack time (13 minutes more in classes with naps), and other activities (12 minutes more for classes with naps).

One activity of high interest for ACYF as well as child development specialists is the amount of time during the classroom day which is spent in

Table 3.15

Allocated Time in Observed Classes
(N=32 classes)

Activity	Minutes of Classroom Day Spent in Activity		
	All Classes	Classes with Naps (N = 8 classes)	Classes without Naps (N = 24 classes)
Arrival/departure	16	15	16
Transition/unallcoated time	28	47	21
Toothbrushing/washing up	9	14	8
Meals/snacks	34	44	31
Nap/rest time	20	71	3
Free play	50	46	51
Directed play	15	14	16
Music/art	16	14	17
Cognitive/academic activities	41	55	36
Other activities	8	17	5

reading to children. As shown in Table TI-71, the time that teachers report reading to children showed a range from 10 to 80 minutes per day, with an average in the BES classrooms of 27 minutes per day.

Observed teacher behavior (a BES program element). When the NTS classroom observer had completed a full day in a classroom, s/he filled out the checklist portions of the ACES observation system, shown in Appendix B. The Teacher Behavior Checklist contains 104 individual items regarding teacher behavior, which are recorded by the observer as being either present or absent in the classroom during the day of observation. The results of this checklist observation are found in Appendix F, ACES, Teacher Behavior Tables 1 through 10 and are summarized in Table 3.16 below. The "CDA Functional Areas" in Table 3.16 refer to the organization of the checklist and its history. The checklist was developed by Jane Stallings at SRI to assess the overall caregiving environment of day care centers and was organized around the competency areas of the Child

Development Associate certification requirements.[4]

It is interesting to note, in Table 3.16, the relatively high scores for the areas of Self Concept and Social Development (67 percent and 69 percent). Only Group Management (74 percent) is higher. These scores again confirm the teachers' stated emphases of Self-Esteem and Group and Social Skills (see Table 3.13, above).

After having referred to scores on the checklist for functional areas, we hasten to point out that, as yet, ACYF is unsatisfied with the configuration of items making up these areas. NTS used the checklist with nearly all original items intact, as we were requested to do by ACYF. Both NTS and ACYF are currently in the process of revising this checklist (Teacher Behavior) and the companion checklist (Tangible Resources), discussed below. Any addition or deletion of items would, of course, affect functional area scores and percentages.

Table 3.16

Average Number of Items Marked "Present" on Teacher Behavior Checklist (N = 32 classrooms)

CDA Functional Area	Number of Items in Area	Average Number of Items Marked "Present", Lead Teacher	Area Score in Percent of Items
Self Concept*	21	14.2	67%
Cognitive and Language Competence	19	10.5	55%
Physical Competence	3	1.7	58%
Health	6	2.8	47%
Safety	6	4.0	67%
Group Management**	22	16.3	74%
Creative Competence	7	3.4	48%
Individual Strength	11	6.0	55%
Social Development	8	5.5	69%
Home-Center	1	.6	64%
TOTAL	104	65.0	63%

*To calculate score, one item had to be reversed from positive to negative.
**To calculate score, two items had to be reversed from positive to negative.

[4]Abt Associates, Children at the Center, Vols.-I-IV, Cambridge, Mass.: Abt Associates, Inc., 1979.

Individualization. We return now to information gained from the site visit interviews. Teachers were asked to describe the activities in which they engage most often when they are working on the individual needs of a child. Teachers were found to vary considerably in their approach to a child's individual needs. Forty-seven percent of the teachers said that they generally take the child aside and work with a particular activity or skill in which the child needs help [Table TI-72]. Thirty-one percent said that most often they join the child to work on the activity in which she/he is already engaged. Ten percent of the teachers said that they provide the child with individual materials or procedures which she/he could use within the large group activities. Six percent of the teachers approach the individual needs of children by grouping children into small groups, all of whom need the same kind of help. Six percent of the teachers felt that they could not describe their most commonly used approach to individualization. The process of individualizing activities for children is generally assumed to require time for staff to talk with one another about the children. Sixty-nine percent of the teachers said that they have a regularly scheduled time for consulting with other staff; while that is a large proportion of teachers, it also means that 31 percent of the teachers do not have a regularly scheduled time for such activity [Table TI-33b].

BES teachers were also asked what methods they use at the beginning of the school year to discover the developmental level of each child in the classroom and to be able to deal with each child's individual needs. As shown in Table TI-79, the methods most often used by teachers were informal observation, and administering diagnostic measures (53 percent and 59 percent, respectively). Informal assessment devices were also used often (the diagnostic measures and informal assessment devices are discussed in the tangible resources portion of the curriculum discussion, which follows). Less often used methods were

discussion with parents or program staff, administering criterion referenced checklists, references for formal testing, and looking at a child's records (13 percent, 16 percent, 1 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

As was discussed in the preceeding section, classroom observers noted the presence or absence of specific behaviors during the classroom observation day. In some cases, the "yes" score indicated the observer's general impression of a teacher's behavior and purposes during the period of observation. The percentage of "yes" scores was disappointingly low on the item on individualization, "Did the teacher individualize most children's experiences?" (48 percent yes). [See Appendix F, ACES-Teacher Behavior Table 2.]

Language spoken. Since many Head Start children speak a first language other than English, it is important to know what languages teachers speak in their Head Start classrooms. Ninety-seven percent of the BES teachers interviewed use English in their classrooms; nineteen percent of those interviewed use Spanish [Table TI-20].

Instructional behaviors. In an initial attempt to discover what categorization of instructional behaviors will be useful in investigating the relationship between this group of process variables and child outcomes, we asked observers to keep track, during the time sampling portion of their observation, of the particular instructional behaviors which they observed. The categories which we used during this data collection period were: direction giving, informational questioning, lecturing/story telling, and assisting/demonstrating. Using this categorization system, we found that the most commonly-observed type of instructional behavior was Direction Giving. Teachers in the observed classrooms spent an average of 44 percent of their time giving directions. The other categories of instructional behaviors which were found to occur, in order of declining frequency, were: Assisting/Demonstrating, Informational Questioning, and

Lecturing/Story Telling (as seen below in Table 3.18, or more extensively in Tables ACES-8A through 8G).

Table 3.18

Percentage of Time Spent on Four Categories of Instructional Behaviors
(N = 32 classrooms)

Instructional Behaviors	Percent of Time Spent (N=32 classes) Mean	Range	Percent of Total 15-Minute Periods in Which the Category of behavior was observed
Direction Giving	44	23-73	83
Informational Questioning	20	3-42	37
Lecturing/Story Telling	4	0-14	10
Assisting/Demonstrating	24	0-46	54

Supervision. Supervision which the teachers receive in Head Start is also seen as being a portion of the intangible curriculum. According to the center directors interviewed, a daily or weekly visit to the teacher's classes is the most common form of supervision of the BES Head Start teachers (41 percent daily, 35 percent weekly) [Table CDI-53]. Supervisory visits are most often arranged on an as-needed basis (according to 76 percent of the center directors), while 24 percent of the center directors say that they use regularly scheduled visits [Table CDI-54]. The teachers interviewed have a wide variety of supervisors, including program directors, education coordinators, and head teachers. In addition, the teachers interviewed indicated that they are responsible for supervising an average of three other individuals within the Head Start program [Tables TI-23b and TI-23c].

Curriculum: Tangible Resources (a BES program element)

For a description of the tangible resources available to teachers, children and parents in Head Start, NTS staff members interviewed center directors and teachers and completed the Tangible Resources Checklist portion of the ACES observation system.

Curriculum guides and materials. BES center directors and teachers were shown a list of commonly used resource materials and curriculum guides designed for the early childhood level and asked which, if any, of these they used in their centers or classrooms. In addition, we asked them what other materials they used, including materials that they had developed for themselves. This list of materials and the numbers of centers and classrooms which use them can be seen in Tables CDI-59 and TI-65. Not surprisingly, a large portion of the center directors (83 percent) said that they use materials in their centers which have been developed by their own staff. In addition, 53 percent of all centers reported that they use the Peabody Language Development Kit. Other commercial curiculum materials used by ten percent or more of the centers were: Early Childhood Curriculum; GOAL: Language Development; PEEK Kit; Frostig Program: the Learning Accomplishment Profile and Curriculum Activities; and the Portage Project Materials [Table CDI-59]. Teachers were asked to respond to the same list of materials. Thirty-one percent of the teachers reported that they use their own curriculum materials; 59 percent of the teachers report using the Peabody Language Development Kit; the only other material used by at least ten percent of the teachers was the Learning Accomplishment Profile (19 percent) [Table TI-65].

Teachers were asked what diagnostic measures they use with children in their classrooms; 19 percent reported using the Learning Accomplishment Profile, 12 percent the Denver Developmental Screening Tests, and 12 percent the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test [Table TI-80]. All other measures reported used by teachers were each used by less than 10 percent of the teachers. Ninety-seven percent of the teachers interviewed said that they assessed the developmental progress of the children in their classrooms during the program year [Table TI-81]. Measures which the teachers reported using for this purpose included

the Learning Accomplishment Profile (16 percent), the Portage Guide to Early Education (3 percent), and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (10 percent) [Table TI-82].

The 119 items in the Tangible Resources Checklist portion of the ACES observation system were completed by the classroom observer. Each item on the Checklist indicates the presence or absence of a tangible resource, for example facilities, equipment, or materials in the classroom or the center. As with the items of the Teacher Behavior Checklist discussed above, these items have been grouped under the functional areas of the Child Development Associate Training System and are reported in Appendix F, Tables ACES, Tangible Resources, 1 through 8, and are summarized in Table 3.19, below. It is interesting to note that the individual functional areas show a rather different pattern of relative scores in Tangible Resources than in Teacher Behavior (see Tables 3.19 and 3.16). The final area on the Tangible Resources Checklist is Environment, which did not appear on the Teacher Checklist, and therefore, cannot be compared. It did, however, have the highest percent score on Tangible Resources and contains such items as "Was the emotional envirionment pleasant, supportive, personalized?" Comparing areas that appear in both scales, group management items again have a relatively high percent of "yes" scores. Note, however, that some of the areas which received higher scores in Teacher Behavior (Self-concept and Physical Competence) received relatively low scores in Tangible Resources (66 percent and 54 percent, respectively). In addition, two areas which were relatively low on the Teacher Behavior Checklist (Cognitive and Language Competence, and Health) were relatively higher in Tangible Resources (75 percent, and 72 percent, respectively). The reader is referred to the section above on the Teacher Behavior Checklist for discussion of the tentativeness of any interpretation of the item and scale scores on these checklists.

Table 3.19

Average Number of Items Marked "Present" on Tangible Resources Checklist (N = 32 classrooms)

CDA Functional Area	Number of Items	Average Score Classroom	Average Score in Percent of Items
Self Concept	8	5.3	66%
Cognitive and Language Competence	3	2.3	75%
Physical Competence	18	9.7	54%
Health	30	21.5	72%
Safety	26	19.4	75%
Group Management	12	9.9	82%
Creative Competence	16	10.6	66%
Environment*	6	5.4	91%
TOTAL	119	84.1	71%

*To calculate score, three items had to be reversed from positive to negative.

Parent Involvement (a BES Program Element)

The BES program recognizes the need for parent to play an intergral part in the education of their children. NTS's site visitor asked center directors and teachers about how parents were involved in the program and the frequency of their involvement. In an average center, 61 percent of the parents participate in Head Start activities (for example, attend meetings, go on field trips, or visit the classroom), with a range in number from 6 to 347 parents per program [Table CDI-63]. Center directors were asked about the frequency with which the parents participated in the Head Start activities. In the average center, approximately 20 parents participate in Head Start almost daily, approximately 26 participate at least weekly, and approximately 56 participate at least monthly [Table CDI-64]. The majority of the adults who participate in parent involvement activities in BES Head Start are women (82 percent) [Table CDI-65].

Parent -Teacher contact. As this study progresses, parents themselves will be asked in interviews about their participation in Head Start activities. During the site visits which have taken place, however, interviews have not included parents and thus the data in this section is that which was reported by program staff members. Twenty-two percent of the teachers interviewed reported having a regularly scheduled time for talking with the parents individually at the centers, and 69 percent of the teachers reported having a regularly scheduled time for attending parent meetings [Table TI-33b].

Parent classes and workshops. One hundred percent of the BES centers conduct workshops or classes especially for parents, and 82 percent of the centers visited had held a parent workshop or class within the previous month [Tables CDI-68 and CDI-69]. The average number of such parent sessions held during the previous month by each center was 8 (with a range from 1 to 35). The number of parents who attended these parent sessions in the previous month averaged 52,

Table 3.21

Topics Discussed at Parent Training Sessions
(N = 17 programs)

Topics	Percent of Programs
Emotional Development	59
Cognitive/Intellectual Development	59
Teaching Activities for the Home	65
Language Development	35
Physical Development	47
Health and Health Care	59
Nutrition	47
Handicapping Conditions	29
Community Involvement	41
BES Guidelines	24
Other	100

with a range from 2 to 150 [Table CDI-72]. The variety of topics with which the parent training sessions dealt in the Head Start programs was impressive, as can be seen in Table 3.21, above [from Table CDI-74a].

Home visits. Since home visits figure prominently in Head Start programs, portions of both the Center and Teacher Interviews were devoted to this subject. As seen in Table 3.22 below, fifty percent of the teachers interviewed have a regularly scheduled time for making home visits, and none of the teachers interviewed reported never making home visits [from Tables TI-33b and TI-34]. Thirty-one percent of the teachers make home visits at least every two months; while 69 percent make visits less often than every two months.

Table 3.22

Frequency of Home Visits and Accompanying Materials for Parents
(N = 32 teachers)

	Percent of Teachers Interviewed
Have a Regularly Scheduled Time for Home Visits	50
Frequency of Home Visits	
Never	0
Weekly	3
At least monthly	6
At least every two months	22
Less than every two months	69
Frequency of Providing Materials During Visit	
Never	38
Every visit	27
Every second visit	16
Less often	16

Seventy-two percent of the teachers interviewed reported leaving books or other materials with the parents during their home visits. Sixty-nine percent of these teachers leave such materials at least every other visit. Of the teachers who reported leaving books or materials with the parents, 95 percent report that they explained to the parents how to use the materials left with them [Tables TI-36 and TI-37].

Lending libraries. Seventy-six percent of the center directors interviewed reported having lending libraries which parents can use; and in those centers with lending libraries, an average of 26 parents use the lending library each week [Tables CDI-91 and CDI-92]. A wide range of materials are available in these lending libraries including books on parenting skills, children's books, puzzles, games, cookbooks, toys, filmstrips and projectors, records, record players, and educational kits [Table CDI-94]. In addition, 94 percent of the center directors said that their programs had developed methods to encourage parents to work at home with their children in areas related to basic skills [Table CDI-95].

Policy Councils. The Head Start Policy Council is an important element of every Head Start program and is a critical part of BES parent involvement. The Policy Council in 94 percent of the Head Start programs visited meets every month [Table CDI-85]. An average of 23 parents (ranging from 1 to 50) had attended the most recent Policy Council meeting. Individuals other than parents also attend the Policy Council meetings. The most common non-parents present at the meetings include program directors, parent coordinators, and teachers [Tables CDI-86 and CDI-87]. In most cases, the reported role of the non-parents at the Policy Council meetings was to observe (65 percent of the centers) and/or to serve as advisors (88 percent), rather than to conduct the meetings (12 percent) [Table CDI-94]. The Policy Council tends to be involved in decision-making regarding areas of the BES program, including staff issues, budget issues, curriculum questions, services and activities for children and services and activities for parents [Tables CDI-89 and CDI-90].

Parents in the classrooms. Parent participation in the classroom is a key element of the parent involvement component of BES. Fifty-nine percent of the programs reported that parents can visit their classrooms both on a scheduled

and on an unscheduled basis [Table CDI-66]. In 6 percent of the programs visits are on a scheduled basis and in another 6 percent the visits are generally unscheduled. Once in the classroom, the parent participates in the classroom activities in a number of different ways. The activities in which parents participate, according to center directors, are reported in Table CDI-67, and are listed in Table 3.23 below, with the percentage of centers in which parents are reported to participate in each of the activities.

Table 3.23

Activities in which Parents Participate in the Head Start Classroom
(N = 17 centers)

Activity	Percentage of Centers Reported
Supervise Free Play	35
Read to the Children	47
Help with Art Projects	53
Set up Materials for the Teacher (such as snacks, art materials, etc.)	59
Help with Field Trips	41
Teach Their Own Child	47
Teach Other Children in Group or One-to-one Situations	53
Supervise Snacks	41
Clean-up	35
Other Activities	100

As can be seen from the above list, while many parents' contributions to the classroom are in the area of caretaking, for many other parents the involvement is directly with the children in learning situations.

Continuity of the Head Start Program with Local Elementary Schools (a BES Program Element)

Because the continuity of a child's educational experiences during the early childhood years is of considerable importance to ACYF, a portion of the

interview with the center director dealt with the relationship between the Head Start program and the local elementary schools. There appears to be a sharing relationship between almost all of the programs and their respective local elementary schools. Seventy-seven percent of the Head Start center directors reported sharing the use of buildings with the public schools; and 59 percent reported sharing of administrative personnel [Table CDI-24]. Seventy-seven percent report using consultants from the public school system and 41 percent share a transportation system. Forty-seven percent share teachers and 59 percent share supervisors. In more than half of the programs which share teachers, the public school teachers provide service to the Head Start programs on a weekly or more frequent basis [Table CDI-25a]. All of the centers reported some special Head Start activities which were designed specifically for preparing the children for elementary schools [Table CDI-27]. The activities which were reported by the center directors are listed in Table 3.24, along with the percent of the centers where each occurs [from Table CDI-27]. Notice that:
(1) there is a wide variety of such activities, and (2) those activities which have to do with an exchange with elementary schools (items 1-5) are almost as "popular" as preparations for elementary school which appear to depend on the Head Start teacher or program's perception of skills needed in school (items 6-9).

Most of the Head Start programs appear to have a good to excellent relationship with their local public schools, in the opinion of center directors. Thirty-five percent of the center directors said that their relationship was good; and 47 percent said that the relationship was excellent. The remaining programs and schools have relationships that are fair (18 percent). None of the center directors characterized their relationships with the schools as difficult or non-existent [Table CDI-28].

Table 3.24

Head Start Activities Which Prepar Children for Elementary School
(N = 17 centers)

Activity	Percent of centers
Public School teachers attend training with Head Start teachers	59
Public School teachers visit Head Start classrooms	71
Head Start parents visit public schools	59
Head Start children regularly visit public schools	35
Head Start children visit public schools just prior to enrollment	59
Head Start children role playing public school attendance	71
Emphasis on academic skills development	59
Emphasis on social skills development	77
Teaching children to follow directions and understand rules	65

Opportunity to Benefit

In this chapter we have been describing the process data which were gathered while visiting the Head Start programs in the evaluation. The previous sections, which focus on the variables in the first two components of the conceptual framework, described the "determinants" of the program process and the "process" itself, at the classroom level. This final section looks at the program as experienced at the individual child's level.

The data in this section are not extensive. At the time of the site visits, no children were yet identified who would be participating in the longitudinal evaluation. Preliminary measures of a "child's exposure to the program" were tried out during the classroom observations on only a small number of children, up to five per classroom observed.

The major variables in this component which we have attempted to measure thus far are: group size, individual time spent on activities, and the level at which the child is engaged in an activity.

At the beginning of the classroom observation, the observer randomly chose 5 children from the class rosters to observe. Thus, in addition to recording information about the entire class every 15 minutes, the observer also recorded information about five target children at the same time intervals. In the 32 classrooms observed, there were a total of 151 target children. Most of these were four and five-year olds. (Forty-seven percent were four-year-olds; 36 percent five-year-olds; 6 percent three-year-olds; and 2 percent six-year olds [Table ACES-1].)

Group Size. During observation the target children spent a little over half of their time (55 percent) in a group which was composed of the entire class [Table 3.25 below and Table ACES-6A]; but they also spent over a third of their time in small groups (7 or fewer children). The time spent in these small

Table 3.25

Percent of Time Spent in Three Group Sizes/Target Children
(N=151 children)

	Percentage of Time	
Group Size	Mean	Range
Entire Class (average size = 17 children)	55	23-100
Large Group (8 or more children)	13	0-55
Small Group (7 or fewer children)	36	0-78

groups is of considerable interest since positive effects of small groups were found in the National Day Care Study.[5] When we consider that certain activities commonly occur only in entire-class groups (for example, transition, meals, naps), the time spent in small groups appears substantial.

[5] Abt Associates, 1979.

Level of Engagement. At the end of each fifteen-minute observation period, the observer noted the level at which s/he judged each child to be "engaged" in the ongoing activity for that child. Possible ratings were minimal, moderate, or extensive engagement. "Extensive engagement" indicates that the child is engrossed in the activity. "Moderate" means that s/he is paying attention to the activity and participating, but could not be said to be engrossed. A child who is minimally engaged is paying little or no attention to the activity in which s/he appears to be participating. The average child score for level of engagement across a full classroom day was 2.27, or slightly more than "moderate engagement," with a standard deviation of .37.

Group size and engagement. If we can assume that a high level of engagement is desireable for child outcomes,[6] then the best group size (most conducive to extensive engagement) is Small Group. The correlation of Small Group with level of engagement is .19, significant at less than the .01 probability level [Table ACES-6B]. This relationship between group size and engagemet further underlines the importance of the above finding about the amount of time that Head Start children spend in groups of different sizes.

[6]This relationship can be investigated when both exposure and outcome variables are measured for a single group of children.